



75

# THE CONVALESCENT.

BY

N. PARKER WILLIS.



NEW YORK:  
CHARLES SCRIBNER, 124 GRAND STREET.

M DCCC LIX.

Q.S.

PS 3324  
C6  
1859

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by

CHARLES SCRIBNER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of  
New York.

W. H. TINSON, Stereotyper.

J. J. REED, Printer.

TO

WILLIAM BEATTIE, OF LONDON,

AND

JOHN F. GRAY, OF NEW YORK,

PHYSICIANS,

To whose counsel I have owed so much, and whose still

CONSTANT FRIENDSHIP,

in health or sickness, is so inestimably precious to me, I  
gratefully inscribe this record of convalescence.

N. P. WILLIS.

IDLEWILD, April, 1859.



## DEDICATORY PREFACE.

---

To SICKNESS I have always found I had much reason to be indebted ; but, among the other blessings which have come to me under its apparent untempting veil, I number two of the most precious memories of the past—two of the habitual and most unfailing sources of my happiness at the present hour—the friendships of two eminent men, to whose medical care and counsel, under Providence, I have, at different times, owed my recovery.

By Dr. WILLIAM BEATTIE, the English poet and physician, so well known to our countrymen, I was first attended, in 1835, when dangerously ill in London ; and, with the acquaintance thus formed upon a sick-bed, commenced a confidential intercourse, maintained subsequently by a correspondence, which, after twenty-four years of almost constant separation, still retains its first interest and cordiality. My last and just-received letter from the venerable man (now near eighty years of age, if I am not mistaken), came accompanied with a present of ten or twelve rare books from his choice library, and an invaluable manuscript of Campbell the poet, whose most intimate friend he was during that afflicted man's troubled life, and to whom he performed so devotedly the last services and honors.

By Dr. JOHN F. GRAY, of New York, I have been more lately attended, through the years of my critical experience of

pulmonary disease; and to his admirable skill, and watchful and patient care, I owe, like so many others, a recovery, by all others thought impossible. For even so weary an illness, since it brought within reach treasures I might otherwise have lost —the intimate knowledge of such a man, and the privileged assurance of a place in his heart—I thank God as for a blessing.

Looking upon the well-tried and affectionate friendships of these two eminent and admirable men—friendships first won in sickness, but confirmed and strengthened in after health—as among the choicest privileges and honors of my varied life, let me, by gratefully inscribing their names together on the first leaf of this record of convalescence, link the two jewels found so far apart, to be left, as it were, in a casket of memory to my children.

## TO THE READER.

---

THE key to the volume which follows—or rather the encouragement to the collection of its contents into a volume for re-publication—is the *very large correspondence of inquiry* drawn upon me by the appearance of the articles, one after another, in the “Home Journal.” I find, by the number and earnestness of the strangers who have thus written to me, that there is a very large PUBLIC OF UNREST, composed of Invalids—consumptives more particularly—whose main and most hopeful inquiry is for some new catholicon of health. From any more fortunate or successful fellow-patient, whose cure would seem to be remarkable, the experience is sought, with exceeding interest and particularity.

“Convalescent” as I find myself to be, at present, however, or in as fair health as may reasonably be expected at the beginning of one’s fifties—and this after being pronounced by many physicians an incurable case of consumption—I have no special medicine to commend. It is in answer to many correspondents that I here say I can advocate no particular theory of pulmonary treatment. With a reasonable amount of advice from any school of medicine, with a sensible watch of Nature’s curative instincts, and with proper self-government, persevering exercise, and control of appetites, the most “incurable” may often take the “favorable turn.” There is but one little secret, of which I may

## TO THE READER.

confess to have accidentally learned the value in my own experience of recovery—accidentally, because I practised it, not for cure but by way of resigning myself to a destiny I believed to be irretrievable—and in this very un-medical secret there may often be a cure for consumption. It is that the patient, after paying reasonable attention to the symptoms and treatment of his disease, should *ignore and out-happy it!* With good spirits, occupation, and *the disease taken little or no notice of*, recovery is, at least, much more likely. This book will, perhaps do its best office, in showing how that indirect cure operated upon me.

Of topics which interested me, of excursions I took, etc. etc. during this year or two of convalescence, the chronicles are also here given. It forms altogether a volume of most digressive miscellanies, for which, of the general reader, indulgence should be asked. But it is to my parish of INVALIDS, that, I must confess, I principally address and commend it.

## C O N T E N T S.

---

### L E T T E R I.

Advantage of Evergreen Trees—Swapping Hats—Billy Babcock, the Centenarian—His Habits and Dress—His Memory of Washington—His Pension—Droll effect of meeting on the Road a given-away Suit of Old Clothes, etc., 18

### L E T T E R II.

Spontaneousness in Writing—An Adventure in Riding—Mounted at one time on a Horse and a Cow—A Story by a neighbor Fisherman—Catching a Snapping-turtle—Ward's Adventures—The Difficulties of Winter Pilotage of Steamboats, before the Railroad on the Hudson—Bald Eagle on the Ice, etc., etc ..... 21

### L E T T E R III.

Winter Diseases—Foliage in White, after a Light Snow—Capture of a 'Possum —Chase in the Snow, with Bare Legs—'Possum's Habits when caught, etc. 33

### L E T T E R IV.

The Highlands, with the Hudson frozen over—Difference of Scenery without Water—Sleigh-ride over the Ice—West Point—Cozzens's—Dell-Monell and Font-Anna—Tedium of Winter..... 39

### L E T T E R V.

Use of Love for Dumb Animals—Quinty and his Doom—A stray Dog and his Habits—His death—Dog Insanity, etc..... 43

### L E T T E R VI.

Poetry of Wild Animals in a Neighborhood—An Insane Wolf—His coming down from the Mountains to claim Hospitality—Visit to a Neighbor's to see his Remains—The Irishman's reluctance to confessing having buried him—The disillusion and the "Yaller Dog."..... 43

## LETTER VII.

Pilgrimage across the River—Two miles on the Ice—Polypus Island—Its Un-suspected Capabilities—Billy Babcock and his Hat—The Sonnet to the Hat, etc. etc..... 55

## LETTER VIII.

Pleasure of doing a Thing for the First Time—Meeting of Politicians on the Road, bound to a Meeting—Asked to go and make a Speech—The Disadvan-tage of the Counsellor's handsome Boots—My Speech in Favor of dividing the County, etc., etc..... 61

## LETTER IX.

Charm of Early Spring—Philosophy of Work as Overseer—Kindling Woods—The Skunk and his Flesh and Habits—The Moiment to the Czar—A curious Stump coming down with the Freshet—Quinty's Fear of it, etc., etc..... 71

## LETTER X.

Visit from Old Billy Babcock—His Breakfast and Memories—Billy's Daguerreo-type—Honoring Gift of a Coat to him—Sam B. Ruggles's Impulse, etc. etc. 80

## LETTER XI.

Visit to a Valley Uninhabited—Johnny Kronk's Fisherman Hut—Hubbard the Boatman—Discovery of a Spring, and Naming it Font Anna—An Eagle—Pic-Nic in Dell-Monell—The Baptism by that Name—Snakes not found, etc.,.. 87

## LETTER XII.

Rights of Boys—Natural Freedom of Chestnut-trees—A Chestnut-Saturday— Curious party of Strangers visiting Idlewild—Tying Horses to Trees in Pri- vate Grounds—Low Standard of general Politeness..... 94

## LETTER XIII.

My Crumb-family of Winter-birds—The Kingfisher and Blue Jay—the Red Squirrel—A Quadruped Chicken—A Chicken half Duck—A Stuffed Bantam Hen—Interview between Stuffed Hen and Living Bantam Cock, Jake, etc. 100

## LETTER XIV.

Late Freshet—Pond washed out and Boat gone—Death of two favorite Dogs— Charming Habits of the lost ones—Jake's other Name—His History etc.. 107

## LETTER XV.

Letter to Morris about a previous Letter torn-up—Temptingness of the topic—Pleasure of writing confidentially—Tired look at the Letter—Discontent with it—Tearing up—Reason why, and reconsideration—Irving's Abbotsford—Fragments of torn Letter re-gathered—Trip to Irvington—Breakfast with an old Friend in a same old place—Railway ride to Irvington—Wolfert's, dell—Mr. Grinnell's yacht, the "Haze"—Sunnyside and Mr. Irving, etc. etc..... 116

## LETTER XVI.

Continuance of Letter to Morris descriptive of a Day with Washington Irving—Impression of his Appearance—Visit to his Library—His Desk and Blotting-sheet—Conversation for a halfhour—Literary habits—Motley's "Dutch Republic"—Feeling as to his own New Books before they were reviewed—History of the first Conception of the Sketch-Book—Pictures on the Walls—The Grounds of Sunnyside—Comparison of Climates—Tulip-trees in triplets—Squirrels and two-legged Tree-destroyers—Humorous Reason for Growth of Trees—Incident at starting on our Drive to Sleepy Hollow, etc., etc..... 124

## LETTER XVII.

Concluding Letter to Morris about the Visit to Mr. Irving—Protest against "Influence of the Air" of Sleepy Hollow—"Green Lane" character of the Road—No living Dutch Inhabitants to be seen—House of the Dutch Family who keep the Keys of the Hollow—Boyish Reminiscence of Mr. Irving's—Monument of Andre—Haunted Bridge of Logs—Brom Bone's Pumpkin—Character of Scenery—Oldest Church on the River—Family Tomb of the Irvings—Passing of Undercliff in the Rail-train—Philosophy of Mr. Irving's Charm of Personal Character and Manner, etc., etc..... 135

## LETTER XVIII.

Containing a Curious Story of a Hard-run Squirrel and two Celebrated Editors..... 145

## LETTER XIX.

Ancient Duty of Hospitality—Chance for it at Newburgh—The Boats up and down—Trip to Poughkeepsie—Passengers on the Day-boat—Missing the Down-boat—Adventures in Poughkeepsie—The splendid Straw Hat for a Sign, and its Eager Acquisition—A whole Child, etc., etc..... 153

## LETTER XX.

Jake and Quinty once more—A Poem to Jake's Memory—The Dog the Under-valued of this Earth—De Trobriand's Obituary of Jake—Present of a new Dog from a Stranger—Bell's getting him Home—Jerry's Character and his hatred of a Gentleman—Bianca Raventail and Kitty Grizzle—Dog Friendship and its Nature—Monody on Quinty, by a Distinguished Lady of Boston, etc. 165

## LETTER XXI.

Bianca Raventail's behavior to a Wild-cat Cousin—A Secret too romantic to be kept—Bayard Taylor and our Friend the Judge—Taylor's Friendship and his fellow Traveller—His Letter—Description of his German Home—Offer of Capital to Taylor, by Col. Perkins of Boston—Romance of Taylor's Life, etc..... 180

## LETTER XXII.

Previous Account by Friend Sands—Seeing with different Eyes—The raised Leg of Massachusetts—His laid-off Garter and Slippers—Fossil of an Eden Day—Buzzard's Bay Physiognomy—Wood's Hole—The Yacht Azalia—Edgartown, and its Head Man Dr. Fisher—Indian Shell-currency of the Island—Extract from an old Book about Nantucket—Quaker Character of Buildings and of Scenery—Contrast between Quaker and Indian Names—Indian Legend and its Poetry—Quaker superiorities—Early and easy Marriages—Whale Oil Agility and Grace of Gait, etc., etc..... 197

## LETTER XXIII.

Gay Reception at Edgartown—Happy Exemption from the usual Penalty of the Voyage—Picnic Refreshment on the Voyage—Universal Temperance—Original Price of the Island of Nantucket—Quaker Exemptions from Common social Evils—Curious Chapter from an Old Book, about the "Friends" of Nantucket, and their Manners and Customs—Specimen of the First-born Poetry of the Island, etc. etc..... 210

## LETTER XXIV.

Arrival at Nantucket—Peculiar Vehicle of the Island—Ramble in the Town the first Evening—Disappointment in the Physiognomy of the Place—Visit to an Old Inhabitant—The Macy Family—Picture of the last Indian Native of the Island—His Pride about Shoes—Kadooda and his Laws—Band of Music—Curious Nantucket Predjudices, formerly, on the Subject, etc., etc..... 223

## LETTER XXV.

Mounting a Nantucket Steeple—Sensations in the Belfry—Curious Spanish Bell—  
 Trip to 'Sconset—Funny Laws of the Place—Queer Poem—Arrival at the Arcadian Village—Hour on the Beach before Dinner—Sea-Mockery of Life's Story—Meeting with Ladies—Chowder-Time and Entrance to the Inn—The Manly Landlady—Excellent Dinner—Puppet-show of Whale-ships—Sharks on the Beach—Whittling-Room—Philosophy of Whittling—Return to Nantucket, etc., etc. .... 244

## LETTER XXVI.

A 'Sconset Acquaintance—A Talk with a Sea-Captain Forty Years after he was chewed up by a Whale—The Harpooning and the turn of the Angry Monster upon his Enemies—The Marks of his Four Teeth—The After-History of the Crushed Mouthful—Six days to Port—Arrival at Peru—The Emperor's Physician—The Back-Country Doctor—Captain Gardiner's Invention of a Tandem Hammock—Ride over the Mountains between two Mules—Recovery after Six Weeks—Command resumed and Voyage prosecuted—Important Considerations as to the American Whale Fishery, etc., etc. .... 257

## LETTER XXVII.

Visit to the Light-house of Sancoty's Head—View of a Curious Lake—Suggestion as to a new Revenue for Nantucket—Aquatic Cow-yard to Milk the Whale—History of the first Whale ever captured—The Spermaceti Aristocrat of the Ocean—Process of Killing and Preparing—Poetry of Indian life on the Island—Recent Connection of Nantucket with the Mainland by Telegraph, etc., etc. .... 266

## LETTER XXVIII.

To Invalid Morris—Morning at Brady's—His Reason for moving further up Broadway—Photograph of Dana and its uses—Bancroft, Dr. Potts, Russell Lowell, etc.—Likeness of Lord Napier—Description of "Imperial Photograph"—Comments on Photography and Portrait Painting—A true Likeness and its Injustice—Suggestion of an Inquiry for Artistic Philosophy, etc. .... 281

## LETTER XXIX.

To Morris at Mobile—Out-door Luxury of Southern Climate—"Tiff's Exchange"—Southern Noon-ing—New Orleans and its Chaotic Marvels—Shirt-sleeve Promenade—Recommendation to Transplant a New Orleans Fashion to Broadway—Invalid Advice—Caution as to Trifles, etc., etc. .... 291

## LETTER XXX.

Pleasure of having a Friend at a Distance—Trip to Town and first Call for Newest Gossip—Bridal Reception, and re-beautiful-ness of a Retired Widow—Omnibus-Drive down Broadway—Petticoats doing Penance—New Fashion of Coat-Collars—Throats dressed differently—Beards—Boots—Hats—Dinner at Dietz's—Mrs. Hatch at the Tabernacle—Morris in Florida, etc., etc..... 299

## LETTER XXXI.

Starting of the Summer Boat on the Hudson—Forbidding a Neighbor the Premises—Caprices of Clunite, etc., etc..... 308

## LETTER XXXII.

Prodigality of Spring—Blight of Evergreens—Pleasure of living in the country—Hog Liberty, etc., etc..... 311

## LETTER XXXIII.

Discovery of a New Spring—Employment for Idle Day—Digging out a Hanging Rock—A Discovery—A Visit, etc., etc..... 320

## LETTER XXXIV.

Answer to many Inquiries—Corroboration of Experience—Mental Effect of Horseback-Riding—Unstableness of a Stable—Exercise with or without Fatigue—Insufficiency of Pedestrian Exercise—Philosophy of Uses of a Horse—Importance of the Use of a Saddle-Horse to Old Age—How much it affects Brain-work in all Professions—Advice to Convalescents, etc., etc..... 329

## LETTER XXXV.

Advice for Invalids, etc..... 337

## LETTER XXXVI.

Experiences of Friendship, etc..... 345

## LETTER XXXVII.

Mouth made up for a Week's Feast on Physical Beauty—Journey to Springfield for the "Fair"—Miracles sold for cheap Tickets—Physiognomy of rural Massachusetts—Energetic improvement of Springfield Street and Houses—Male Passions for Horse-talk—Promotion of Horse-dignity at Springfield—Description of Races deferred, etc., etc..... 359

## LETTER XXXVIII.

Second Letter—Taking the Opportunity to look through a Wiser Man's Eyes—Drive to the Hippodrome—Visits to the Horses in their Stalls—Company of Good Observers—Horse "Hard-Times" and his Card—Beauty of the Petersham Morgan—Style of the Black Horse, "Lone Star"—Suitableness of Horse to his Rider—Perfecting of the Quadruped and Deteriorating of the Biped—Need of Reformation in the Shape and Condition of American Man—One Exception, etc., etc..... 265

## LETTER XXXIX.

The Hippodrome on the Second Day—The Trotting-match—The Aspect of the Crowd on the Course—Ethan Allen and Hiram Drew—Philosophy of fast Trotting—Portrait of a famous Yankee Jockey—Cavalcade of Gentlemen's equipments—Lack of Style in American Driving—Society on Wheels and Beauty of a Park Drive—The Equestrian Cavalcade with Lady-riders—Unsuitableness of Crinoline to the Side-saddle, etc., etc..... 374

## TRIP TO THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

## LETTER I.

Unceremonious Departure—The Journey South—Glimpse of the Susquehanna—Cloudless Welcome to Virginia—Digression to narrate a Story—Saw-Mill in the Woods—A Hoist into the Air unexpectedly—The Miller and the Interior of his Hut—His Death, that Night—The Scene of his Laying-out—Who he was etc., etc..... 383

## LETTER II.

First Experience of eating a Persimmon—Suggestion as to Nature's Symbol for Secrecy—Chance for Cheap Living in "Ole Virginny"—Instance of Oblivious Life—What Good Blood may stagnate down to—Fight with the Guardian Dog—Interior of a Reduced Gentleman's Residence—Dried Apples produced—Mrs. X. as seen through her Dirt—Virginia Lack of Yankee Curiosity, etc..... 391

## LETTER III.

Drive through the Pine Woods—An old Chapel—The Craves of the Family of Washington's Mother—Copy of an Epitaph—The Blind Preacher—Female seclusion in Virginia—Disappointment as to their Horses—Excellent way of hitching Horses—Tandem of Cows—Carelessness of personal appearance in Virginia Gentlemen—Mistaken impression of a Fellow-traveller, etc... 401

## LETTER IV.

Negro Happiness in Virginia—Persevering Politeness against Discouragement—Family's Slaves Moving West—Evening View of a Negro Cabin—Aunt Fanny, the Centenarian and the Black Baby—New kind of Negro Music—Pig-matins at Daylight—Chats with Negro Woodsmen—Virginia Supply of Black Walnut for Coffins—Adroit Negro Compliment—Family Graves on Plantation—Visit to the Hut of a Murderer's Widow. .... 410

## LETTER V.

Caught asleep—General Mint-julep before Breakfast—Virginian Refinements of good Eating—Reëmbarkation on the Rappahannock, for Fredericksburg—The River, along through King George County—Country-seats of the Carters, Tayloes and other well-known Names—Scene of George Washington's Boyhood—His Mother and her humble Cottage—His every-day Appearance and Character at Fredericksburg, when a Boy—Difference of the Boy-ideal from that of a Man—A second Picture of the adolescent Washington, from sixteen to twenty—His first Visit to Belvoir and Intimacy with the Fairfaxes—Wish that a gifted Descendant of this Family would give us their Remembrances of Washington—Fredericksburg itself and its Tomb and Chapel—Snow, and Journey across to the Potomac, etc., etc., etc.,.... 419

## LETTER VI.

Valley between the Potomac and Rappahannock—Washington's Frequent Ride across the "Neck of Virginia"—His Personal Appearance, when a Young Man—Young Washington the Surveyor—A Chance Tableau of Contrasted Fairfaxes and Planters—The Young Englishman on Board the Boat, and our Virginia Captain—The Captain's Outer Man compared with his Passenger's—His New Invention—The Reading of his Application for a Patent—The Young Englishman's Self-sacrifice for Friendship—Parting of the well-trimmed Plant of a London Gentleman, and the George Washington "Run to Seed," etc., etc. .... 437

## LETTER VII.

Charm of the Number Seven—The Nile among Periodicals—Virginia Tea-table Peculiarity—Virginia Fashion of Ornamental Trees—Talk with a Physician About Intermittents and Negroes—Fever and Ague something of a Bugbear—Prescription—A Neglected Bird—Superiority of wild Geese to tame—Curious Restoration of a Virginia Church—Former and Present Standard of Manners—Mount Vernon from a Historical Point of View—Curious Document, etc., etc. .... 447

# THE CONVALESCENT.

---

## LETTER I.

Advantage of Evergreen Trees—Swapping Hats—Billy Babcock, the Centenarian—His Habits and Dress—His Memory of Washington—His Pension—Droll effect of meeting on the Road a given-away Suit of Old Clothes, etc., etc.

JANUARY 7, 1855.

WEATHER to sit out of doors with a book! April is reconnoitering. And I never so much realized, as to-day (though I have recorded it before), the wisdom and luxury of a home buried in evergreen trees. Without the ice in the river, there would be no necessity of knowing that it is not summer. Every particle of snow gone from the fields and mountains, and a sun so warm, that to the children exercising out of doors, the *full shade* of our groves of hemlocks and cedars is welcome! The farmer, about here, is bothered with the luxuriant pertinacity of these evergreens. He thinks of them as Bombastes thought of Fuzbos:

“He conquered all but Fuzbos—Fuzbos *him* ;”

but, to grounds cultivated for beauty, such prodigal growth of trees, whose foliage recognizes no winter, are a wealth and a blessing. To-day, we look out of open windows, upon a summer of both trees and temperature.

I was called upon yesterday to remember an appeal to your patriotism, which I promised to make—you being a general and the object of appeal being a revolutionary soldier with whom I have lately swapped hats, with the understanding that your influence to procure him a pension was to be “thrown in.” As the hat I got by my bargain is a relic, having been worn by a revolutionary head while crossing from its first to its second century, and two years beyond the crossing, I must be excused for giving the history of “our trade” rather circumstantially—the hat being thus made authentic by having its story told, and the wearer being brought to your charitable notice, “as agreed.”

My friend Torrey, the village blacksmith, had several times offered to “show me the beat” of the revolutionary soldier I visited and described in the Home Journal last summer. He declared that “old Babcock, up in the mountains,” was “more of a cur’osity,” for he could hold a stick in both hands and jump over it, at a hundred years old, and that was two years ago. He was “still full of fun and as sharp as a ’coon,” though quite a vagrant in his habits, and going to and fro, between here and

Jersey, as he could find temporary work, or as he took the whim. Five or six generations of his descendants were scattered along through the mountains (the old man counted them last at one hundred and sixty-five) but they were all poor, and he was still homeless and thriftless. His one steady idea seemed to be to get a pension, as he had served six years in the revolutionary army, and had been in the battle of Monmouth and the battle of Stony Point, and was wounded at Monmouth. The difficulty lay in his having left the army "without any writing to show for it," though he did it to work in the mountain-forge, back of West Point, where he was a journeyman when the war begun, and where he was sent for again, to help cast cannon balls for the army. I was interested in the story, as Torrey's hammer emphasized it on the heels of my mare, and promised to give the old man a kind welcome when he should come.

One bright morning, accordingly, his name was sent up to me. Torrey had been too busy to leave his shop, but another of my village cronies, Chatfield, the tanner, had undertaken to show the old man the way. He sat in the library, when I went in, directly under a bust of venerable Tasso—a closely-shaved and pinched-faced little old man, under a heavily-bearded old patriarch—and my first thought, I must own, was a wonder that so beautiful and needful a drapery, for the features of age, could ever be refused its

natural growth and office. A veil of snowy white had been given by God to that little toothless mouth and to the stringy wrinkles of that repulsive chin and throat, and yet with the cost perpetual, and pains daily and vexatious, Nature's unceasing effort to put it on were resisted !

"A bite and a glass of summat" had preceded me, and my visitor was lively and talkative. His hearing and sight were apparently as good as ever, and in quickness of reply he certainly excelled most men, young or old, of his class of life. I began conversation rather jokingly, but he was soon "down upon me," as my neighbor said, "like a thousand of brick." Hilarity and imperturbable good-nature seemed to have constant possession of him. He had no reserves. Some allusion was made to his favoring one leg more than the other in his movements; and he ascribed it to a rheumatism, got by sleeping "out on the road the other night" (in November) "after a glass too much." He said he knocked at all the doors as he went along, and asked for a night's lodging, and they "passed him on" with their "no room, go to the next house!" till he was tired. So he lay down under a wall; and "it wouldn't have hurt him, if it hadn't sprung up cold in the night, *and froze!*" In this homeless habit of wandering, as in the making of baskets, which is his resource, when he can find nothing better to do, he seemed to show gipsy blood.

The questions we naturally put to him concerning Gene-

ral Washington (of whom he told us nothing except that he saw him every day for years), brought up the "pension" matter, and he stated his case—urging it much more strenuously when he found I had a General among my acquaintances. Seeing his hat, which he had thrown into the corner behind the door on entering the library, I took it up while he was talking, and inquired into its history. He had bought it in his ninety-ninth year, and worn it ever since—now three years. It had evidently been sat upon and slept upon, and used for the receiving and conveying away of potatoes and cold victuals—the shape long since gone, if it ever had one, and the band supplied by a piece of coarse twine. It was perhaps a "two shilling felt," to begin with; but the honor it had had, in *covering a head while it stepped into its second century*, gave it a value—to say nothing of the wear-out it had received, upon a brain whose boyish recklessness and jollity a hundred years had failed to sober or make sorry! Oh, I wanted that hat! Stepping into the entry, I brought him my Idlewild broad-brim, with its spacious silk band—a hat, the first glance at which "warranted the man to own a cow"—and proposed a "swap." It was amusing to see the cunning old chap assume a value for his hat immediately on finding it was wanted, and dodge all admission that he was making a good bargain. He only agreed, finally, on condition of my "speaking to my friend the General about his pension."

So never come to Idlewild, my dear Morris, or venture to look at the old hat (which now surmounts the bust of John Quincy Adams in the hall), until you have done your possible with the secretary of war, for Billy Babcock and his revolutionary claims.

But I was indebted to the old man, shortly after, for a sudden retrospect, which, I fear, I can hardly make interesting to you—the contrast and grotesqueness of it depending very much on the associations it awakened in my own memory. Driving to Newburgh in the afternoon, we met him, at a sudden turn of the road. He had been down with a load of baskets (eight miles, on foot), and was returning to the mountains—toddling jauntily along with his stick, but the mud and other signs showing that he had stopped to rest when quite too happy to mind *where*. He was dressed from head to foot in a suit of my own clothes which I had given him; and though it was funny, of course, to see my coat and trowsers going to Newburgh with a load of baskets, and coming back “so,” there was still, for *me*, a remoter reach of association in the spectacle. The suit chanced to be the sole memorial of that “dandyism” of twenty years ago, the pickled memory of which is still carefully preserved by my brother editors, and used for the acid to their criticisms. Both coat and trowsers were of London make, in 1836—relics that had seen a deal of sly wear as old clothes in my rainy-day

wood-choppings and brook-clearings, but the fancy cut and decoration of which had hitherto prevented their being given away. There was as much fun as anything else in bestowing them upon the ragged and merry old basket-maker. But, by dint of long keeping and tumbling over, they had insensibly become the furniture of my remembrance of gay life in London ; and to meet them now, suddenly, on the road, zig-zag-ing about on legs and arms a hundred years old, and bound to finish their career in unhoused dirt and vicissitude—there was a mingled drollery and contradictoriness in the confused impression, which made me both laugh and grow thoughtful. If there must be reappearances of one's coats and trowsers, it would be pleasanter to see them in their cleanly and decent wont—not spattered with mud while they are honored by longer wear—and if I had foreseen the venerableness of these after-walks of mine, I certainly should have selected the pantaloons of a plainer period. You see my old-clothes moral, I hope.

My friend, the merry centenarian, has called on me once since. He was finding it too cold in the mountains, and was going over into Jersey for the winter. My velvet facings and silk braids had proved good material for “swap,” and he had parted with all of my toggery except the hat—the pillow-and-cushion duties of this last, however, having rendered its previous history a matter of pure

faith. He was as blithe and quick-witted as ever, and his gaiety—patriarch as he is—was positively infectious. It is the elixir of his unfailing vitality, I am certain. He has no idea of dying, and is “coming round in the spring, to see if *that General* has got his pension fixed.” So keep the matter in mind.

We have had another strange visitor here—but my letter is long enough for these short days. Adieu.

Yours,

P.S. *Jan. 10.*—Let me record that two steamboats passed down the river yesterday, and a sloop to-day, though the ice, which has suddenly vanished with the rain, has been dotted with skaters for a month.

## L E T T E R I I.

Spontaneousness in Writing—An Adventure in Riding—Mounted at one time on a Horse and a Cow—A Story by a neighbor Fisherman—Catching a Snapping-turtle—Ward's Adventures—The Difficulties of Winter Pilotage of Steamboats, before the Railroad on the Hudson—Bald Eagle on the Ice, etc., etc.

JANUARY 27, 1855.

NEW events and fresh information are more interesting than essay-writing, I believe, even if the events are small and the information homely. It is this supposition (with an eye only to the preference of our readers, and the probability of interesting them) which, week after week, makes me throw aside a first half-page of a speculating or criticising “leader,” and fall to describing, instead, some new phase of my every-day life in the country. I am ready to cease being thus autobiographic, when the new incidents and fresh information give out. I never send you one of those homespun letters, in fact, without quite a persuasion that it will be the last. But life always seems to keep new, somehow ; and a present hour always seems to me worth any two of the past or the future. “Yours to command,” however. My hope of interesting, is by making this column *differ*, in case of its failing to *excel*. I will

go oftener to town, and ride in omnibuses and dissipate at parties, whenever those rides are more amusing (say) than the one I describe to-day, or whenever city brains are better worth borrowing from than the brains of our country droppers in—such (say) as my friend the fisherman's, of whose water-life on the Hudson, as he gossipped it over our blazing wood-fire last evening, I will jot down an item or two while I remember it.

And now to my hobnail commonplaces—more sure of a pleasant understanding after this “strictly confidential” apology

You may wonder how a zeal in our common service, should add to my experiences the new sensation of being *mounted upon a cow!* But this, and a ride upon a camel in Asia Minor, are two of this planet's possible emotions with which I shall not pass to another star unacquainted. It was a trifle of a surprise—coming as it did after that hardest day of in-door drudgery which least prepares one for perilous adventure. You know my weekly crisis, the Thursday evening's mail—closing at Newburgh at six, and inevitably to be reached, storm or starlight, by the “final copy for the printer.” I had scribbled, up to the last moment, as usual, hopped into the saddle at dusk, galloped the four miles rather nervously for fear of missing the inexorable bag, reached it, and was trotting leisurely home. It was a cloudy night—dark as half-past six had

ever the liberty to be—when I reached the covered bridge across the mouth of the Moodna.

The small and single lamp, usually making darkness visible at the far end of this rickety old tunnel, was not yet lit. The outline of an entrance, under an arch of hopeless black, was all I could distinguish—a promise of emergence to light on the other side, which required the faith of a gimlet. My horse took a sniff of suspicion, and half bolted; and as he had thrown me over his head a week or two before, and that was my first experience as a one-horse missile, I hesitated a second before putting on the compulsion. In went both heels, however—for it was a bitter cold night, and my lungs are not the customers for winter air without exercise—and in sprung Sir Archy upon the unseen planks. I loosed the rein—instinct being more to be trusted than reason (I have always observed) in “feeling one’s way.” The smothered sound of the hoofs upon the never-swept carpet of lumber-dust and manure, came down in stifled echoes from the roof. Paff! paff! paff!—which side we should bang against, and what hole of the remembered short planks my dancing animal would back into in rearing, I could only guess. A sudden plunge! Half a leap to go over something—but the twitched curb (with the flash across my mind that it was the warped flooring out of place) balked the effort, and the next moment we rose into the air—to explanatory music!

The gasp of *a cow* told the story, while the balance of uncertainty, as to whether I was to fall backwards or forwards, gave me leisure to listen. With the ten legs under me actuated by three different conceptions of the crisis—the cow crossways, the horse for proceeding, and I for retreating—there was a very miscellaneous scramble, for an instant. My horse fortunately recovered his footing without a fall—but whether we had slid to earth over the horns or the tail of the animal that had lifted us, the discreet belly of my horse shows to the inquisitive daylight no sign. As the reclining cow commonly rises first behind, the declivity for us was doubtless towards the head—though the improbability that a gentleman and his horse would ever travel over the horns of old Smith's cow, the most vicious animal in the neighborhood, without a scratch, makes it likely again that we dismounted over the tail. Either way “very happy,” of course; for, with so close a shave upon a *cow-tastrophe*, I should not stand upon ceremony in the dark.

With my neighbor, last evening, the conversation naturally fell upon the perils in our daily experience; and he, having passed his life (and accumulated a very snug property) by varying his farming with shad fishing in the season, steamboat-piloting when they run through the ice in the winter, stopping of drift timber and shooting of ducks, has a truly amphibious knowledge of the Hudson and its

land and water liabilities. I must say I listened to him with great interest, and picked here and there a valuable hint for my own using; though the question occurs, naturally, whether the readers of the *Home Journal*, not being river-rustics themselves, will be as much entertained. But I shall try to be brief.

I silently pocketed a caution as to my next summer's swimming, while the talk fell upon snapping-turtles (among the dangers of the neighborhood), and Ward gave us an account of catching one. He was out in his decoy-boat after ducks, and had chanced to shoot a wild goose, that he left to float among the sedges till he should have leisure to pick him up. Meantime, lying flat in his boat, and watching through the straw bulwark for the game, he observed the dead goose *bobbing under* occasionally. The water was clear, and, with a little closer look, he saw, that, to the broken leg of the goose, which hung down, a large snapping-turtle was reaching up, and trying to get the right hitch to pull the dead bird to the bottom. Ward quietly floated that way, stripped up his sleeve, and, with a sudden pluck, caught the snapper by the middle (out of reach of his head), and threw him into the boat. He was about the size of a chair-cushion, and made "great soup." Happy river, of course, that has such live succulents for poor folks—but, to gentlemen that swim partly under water, the risk of being nibbled at by an animal

whose bite does not loosen even when its head is cut off, makes it one kind of "wild game" too many!

Ward himself is a native growth of "American," in which I take a patriotic delight. The country's reliance, for energy in daily matters and for resource and courage in emergencies, is in the likes of him—few though they be, and yet constituting the centre that holds together the whole wheel of our national energy. His life is to mind his business. He says little—his ideas always keeping ahead of his words. What practical knowledge he needed, he has "come at" by a shorter cut than books, having had no education, and yet doing everything with a "knack" that works like science. At present he is building himself a boat, "just to pass a spare month of the winter," and he thinks no more of that untaught exercise of his ingenuity than an Irishman of peeling a fresh potato. With his early savings (as a sloop-skipper and steamboat pilot), he bought the river farm of which Idlewild was a part, and has since turned everything to account within reach—supplying Newburgh and New York with shad and bass in immense quantities by his skillful hauling and netting, growing the best fruit, stopping the drift-timber after the freshets, killing more wild game than all the other neighbors together, raising famous grain, breeding the best fowls and pigs, and—taking summer boarders. With all this variety of tribute-levying upon

air, earth and water, Ward is as soft-spoken and as quiet-moving as the most indolent man in the world, and, among his neighbors, he stands for the most simply honest and kind-hearted of men, who knows his own rights pretty well, but is willing to help everybody else to theirs.

But Ward's plums and peaches are not the only "largest of their kind," for which he could take the premium. As he sat down by our hickory-fire for an evening's chat, I could not but confess I had rarely seen, out of England, such a specimen of stock for a farmer to be proud of as the well-developed, handsome daughter, of sixteen, who had come in with him, and to whose lap my children ran with their dolls in the opposite corner. I had admired her fine proportions and energetic movement as she skated on the river a day or two before; but her frank and truthful manners, liberally-moulded features, and joyous expression of health and happiness, made her show even better in a drawing-room; and I patriotically wished, as I compared her with the slices of American loveliness principally looked to for the continuation of our country, that such whole girls were plentier.

To return to river dangers, however.

Ward thought he had run one or two risks of drowning, even in such small waters as the Hudson. He was once made "almost too sea-sick to hold on," here in this Highland bay, by being sent to the topmast of a sloop, in one

of our mountain hurricanes. A small boy, then, and with only the rope he had hugged his way up on, to cling to, the pitching and lurching of the sloop, which was all but upset with every blast, threw him about like the knot on the end of a whip-lash, and disturbed his breakfast. But his nearest approach to "giving over breathing with a job half done," was in trying to get up a barrel of salt shad from the bottom of the river. He had been sent with another young man, by his "boss," to take it to a customer, in a boat, and they had accidentally rolled it overboard in deep soundings. It was in the early spring, "before the water was any way pleasant," but he off with everything but his trowsers, tied a rope round his waist, and dived—the other young man agreeing to pull him up when he should telegraph by a kick that he had got hold. A barrel of fish is a heavy thing to lift, under water or out of it, but he got hold of the two ends; and then the trouble was to wait to be pulled up. He hung on, though it was awkward landing it, even after he got it to the top. How near drowning he was, of course he don't now know. He would not care to be any nearer to it, however, for that money's worth of fish.

We had some lesser gossip about snakes and drift-timber, ice-cracks and snow-floods, and then we got Ward upon experiences that will be of more interest to the public at large—his *winter-pilotings* of the *steamboats* that

made their passages while sleighs were running on the river.

The railroad has lessened the urgency of the demand for the winter navigation of the Hudson, but it could always be done "when it would pay." The damage to boats was very great. A gang of ship carpenters was kept waiting on the dock, both at Newburgh and New York, to commence repairs at the moment of arrival. A pipe was arranged to turn steam out upon the wheels, and this melted the ice and dried the wood immediately, so that the carpenters could handle them. They never lost a passage from breakage of paddle-boxes, though they were sometimes terribly shattered. The railroad was then building, and the demand for freight of tools and materials, and passage of workmen, was very great; so that Ward's boat, the Highlander, tried to make two passages in the twenty-four hours—down in the day time and up at night—but the ice in the dark proved too much for them. Another boat was then put on (the Utica), and they crossed each other with day passages.

From the narrowness of the river, at the pass through the Highlands, the ice always closed again where the boat had made a channel, and was often crowded together and piled up "so as to look rather ugly." The Highlander was once stuck, and remained two weeks frozen fast, just opposite West Point; and she was only got out, at last, by

blowing up the ice around her with bomb-shells. The “standing from under,” when the slabs rained down, after those explosions, was “spry work.”

I supposed that the sharper the boat, or the more like a wedge—with the wheels far aft, so that she could take advantage of the cracks in the ice—the better. But it was quite the contrary. They needed the length of the boat for a lever to make her wheels act short on the bow, and then, having once entered a crack (which could not be followed far without bending away from their course), they could manage to break out of it. When ice was thick enough to bear an ox-team, as it was most of the time, the only way to get through it was to *crush it down with the weight of the boat*. They had a false bow put on, therefore, cased in copper, which would enable them to slide up over the edge, with the force of their headway. This would crush it under, for a short distance, and then they would back, get on another head of steam, and charge again. It was sometimes a long and tedious job, breaking through the winding narrows of the Highlands in this way, and there was danger, always, of letting the boat stop long enough for the ice to tighten around her.

Passengers jumped on board almost anywhere, with a projecting plank jutting out, while they slackened a little. Freight was taken on board, and landed, by horse-teams coming out to them on the ice. It was droll, sometimes,

to be going along through a narrow channel with the sleigh-bells keeping pace on the ice alongside—like a sailing and trotting-match on the same element. The business was profitable, as the railway people could afford to pay very high for freight, which they would otherwise have to draw with teams over the back country. Then the Cold-Spring forge was casting bomb-shells, etc., for the Mexican war; and that heavy freight could hardly be got to New York at all, without a boat. At one time there was such a pressure for these war materials that they were obliged to make extra passages on Sundays.

Ward mentioned one of our well-known neighbors who has lately taken to a new amusement. He seems to be fond of sitting on a cake of ice, any sunny noon, and floating down the river, just in front of us. This idler—a *bald eagle*, and the largest remembered in this part of the country—has haunted Idlewild for a year past, and his circlings of swoop around the projecting eminence on which our house stands, are the admiration of man, woman and child, for some distance. He lives, as is well known, by taking tribute of the fish-hawk, from whom he receives the fish just dived for, on presenting his *bill*; but to do this he must be on the wing and ready to pounce down, any instant, with his superior swiftness—so the ice-rafting is probably but a royal amusement. The nest of this monstrous eagle (larger than any goose, Ward says), is some-

where on the peak of the Storm King, whence he sails down upon us, with a turn up the bend of the ravine, by a propulsion which I cannot easily understand. It must be “od-ic force,” or the exercise of my motto (*Will is might*), for he stirs not a wing, and the three miles are done like an arrow-flight. Eagles are sacred among sportsmen, and this one has evidently no fear of being shot; though Ward, whose gun is inevitable, said it was hard not to bring him down, sometimes, when his white head and snowy tail sailed along so temptingly within reach. Of course I plead—spare the King!

The ice has a very flattering way of making a man’s farm seem larger—extending out Idlewild some acres into the Hudson—and my boy, Grinnell, who is skating just now, on this apparently new permanency of meadow, expects me down every moment to witness his progress in the art. I would resume it myself—for, being “split up a good way,” as the boys used to say of my long legs, I was among the fast ones on Frog Pond, in Latin-school days—but, like a churn that makes no butter by gently being carried along, I have a liver that requires an inward exercise beyond skates. Churning and horse-trotting for butter and bile! So, a look at my boy’s new accomplishment, and then to the saddle, to take a *churn*. Yours.

## LETTER III.

Winter Diseases—Foliage in White, after a Light Snow—Capture of a 'Possum  
—Chase in the Snow, with Bare Legs—'Possum's Habits when caught, etc.

JANUARY, 1855.

WINTER is seizing us all by the throat, in this part of the country. The sudden blanketings and un-blanketing of the hills—snows and thaws in wonderfully complete alternation—affect the Highland health. One of my stoutest neighbors, a river sloop-man used to all manner of exposure, died yesterday of the prevailing *bronchitis*. My family table assembles a half-dozen varied *influenzas*—a putting out of tune of its usual accord of voices, which, to one who relies upon it for his only music, is quite an interruption of comfort.

On my favorite curative principle of counter-irritation, I started off, with a stuffed head, for a sharp trot in the snow-storm, a day or two ago, and so chanced to see one of those private theatricals with which Nature makes our country entertainments correspond to the dramatic season in the city. I had been gone two hours among the hills, and the sky and my mucous membranes had meantime been clearing up together. It had stopped snowing and I

had stopped snuffling; and the sun was setting with a glow in the west, of which the blood in my veins felt like a rosy partaker. Slacking rein as I entered the gate, and removing a pair of "green goggles" (excellent uglinesses with which to protect weak eyes from the patter as well as the glare of the snow in riding), I became suddenly aware of a scene of extraordinary beauty. The soft and feathery snow had so completely *foliaged* the trees that they looked full and shady, as in June. The woods on either side had the expression of leafy impenetrableness which enchant<sup>s</sup> the forever-refuge-seeking eye; the meadows and slopes were carpeted with the evenness of a lawn; and over all was spread the warm color of the kindling sunset. It was *midsummer, performed in white*—its burden of leaves all there, and its press and crowd of flowers inimitably copied in snowflakes. The picturesque and beautiful half mile from the river-gate to our door—over meadow and brook, and along the wooded terraces and rocky precipices of the glen—will never be more superb in summer than as I saw it—(riding alone, too, a most unwilling millionaire, to have such a wealth of splendor all to myself)—in the middle of winter.

(What tempting subjects are these glories of Nature with no events to them—so thrilling to the beholder and so tiresome at second-hand! I have indulged this time, but give me credit for twenty resistances.)

The event of the past month, to my children, has been a shirt-tail chase and capture of a 'possum, in the pitiless snow of midnight, a fortnight ago, by the Vice-President of these united stables and hen-roosts, Sam Bell. The narrative of the affair, in Bell's purest of Know-nothing dialect, would be worth Hackett's coming to hear—but I must confine myself to such mere mention of the circumstance as will suffice to introduce to you our patriotic addition to the family—Native American, and found nowhere else, as the 'possum is accredited to be. Waked up at night, in his farm-cottage under the hill, by a stir among the chickens, Bell, it appears, went to the door (in his integument No. 1) to see what was the matter. It was a bright and bitter cold night, after the clearing up of a snow storm; and, with the opening of the door, he saw some dark animal take up the line of its retreat towards the woods. To almost any gentleman (especially from a foreign country) there would be little doubt as to the outweighing of the comparative attractions—a warm wife in the bed he had just left, or a naked-legged rush, through the snow, after a wild animal. The thinking that can be done in a second, however, by one of our prompt and unchance-losing Yankees, is wonderful to know. The mystery of a month of missing chickens and sucked eggs, was explained to Bell by that dark line drawn over the snow—a fox or a wild-cat, as he took it to be. The jumping mo-

tion of "the critter" suggested to him, instantly, that, in deep drifts, he could catch one that would outrun him on hard ground ; and, grabbing the first stick from the wood-pile, he "after him." The snow "felt ugly up round above his knees," and it was heavy running, though he thought he was helped some by having no trowsers; but he gained on the animal, overtook, and "got a lick at him." Whether he had dropped dead or was stopping to spring back, he did not know, but there was the black lump still as death, on the snow before him. It wasn't a pleasant place to stop and think, though it was awk'ard putting a hand out to take hold of a wild varmint in the dark; but he caught sight of something like a tail, made a plunge at it, and "had him," safe off the ground. It turned out to be a 'possum (an animal, as you know, that always drops and pretends to be dead when it is close-pressed), and Bell carried him back to the house, put a string round his neck, tied him to the door-post, and went to bed—first raking open the coals a little, of course, and getting on a dry shirt.

Installed behind the stable, in the box that Buchanan Read's bust came over in (an apartment with an association at his disposal, of course), the 'possum is now "one of us"—a daily visit to him being, for our little people, among the periodicities of the morning. It is a little tantalizing, perhaps, to see "good society" (the hen-roost and

chickens) so absurdly little beyond the limit of his chain, but he bears it with the can't-help-it-ism of a philosopher. You would think, to see him looking from that round hole (a side-door, added to Read's apartment, for his convenience) that those safe chickens whom he is beholding so tranquilly and humbly, were not of the natural species for which nature had given him an appetite—the chickens (*vice versa*) having no more terror at *his* presence than at the child's muff, which he closely resembles. How wonderful is civilized resignation at contiguity to forbidden food!

With vile head, and a tail like a rat's, the opossum's body is a superb mass of light grey fur. His taste in food is fastidious, and he is said to taste (to others) like the tenderest of fresh young pork. This one, we regret to find, is a male—the she'-possum being certainly the most remarkable female in the animal world, and of habits (as a mother) very curious to study. In these days of finding wives too expensive, it is interesting to turn to nature, and see what is expected of husbands upon instinct. The she'-possum is herself *a house*, herself *a carriage*, herself *a doctor*. With the providing of neither of these three expensive articles is her mate burdened. The "abdominal pouch," Natural History tells us, "is the residence of the young, for the infancy period after their birth, and they go in and out," at their happy pleasure. To go any distance,

or ascend a tree, they are “taken by her on the back, where they cling to the fur, and likewise hold on by entwining their little prehensile tails with that of the mother.” “Wonderful medical virtues are attributed to the tail of the female opossum.” When we add, to this luxury of auto-furnishing in his mate, that the ‘possum can *support himself by either end*—hanging to a tree by his “prehensile tail,” and swinging his head in tail-like idleness to the summer air—a professed author, at least, might sigh over a comparison of gifts and privileges!

The drops that have been to the sky to be purified are coming down in countless flakes—cold, separate and pure—to try another course of duty on this defiling earth, mingle again, and wait for another evaporation. Or, as Bell expressed the same bit of news just now, “it snows feather beds.” Through this crowd of life-resuming spirits—through these feathers yet unconfined by ticking and pillow-cases—I must gallop to Newburgh with my letter for the mail. Time to be off.

Yours, pen and horse,

## L E T T E R I V .

The Highlands, with the Hudson frozen over—Difference of Scenery without Water—Sleigh-ride over the Ice—West Point—Cozzens's—Dell-Monell and Font-Anna—Tedium of Winter.

FEBRUARY 2, 1856.

FOR a realizing sense of what the world would be without woman—what strength and sublimity are, that is to say, without grace and loveliness—you have only to come and see the Highlands without the Hudson. I thought for the mere sake of contrast, to-day (February 2), that I would drive to the middle of the river in my sleigh, and follow the familiar steamboat track to West Point. It is frozen solid from shore to shore, and the ice, like the hill-sides, covered with snow, so that it is one bleak and drear surface from the peak over Anthony's Nose to the crown of the Storm-King, with no sign of that long valley's having ever been blessed with running water.

Now, in this most celebrated spot in world for picturesque beauty, you have no idea what a difference it makes! I went, expecting, at least, some new impression of grandeur and sublimity. But the mountains, which, in summer, are grand and sublime, looked only big and ugly to-

day! The height and boldness above, without the contrast with the loveliness below, were simply unsightly. For sheer lack of eye-water, after gazing at the Storm-King's "ugly mug," I turned my eyes over to "Undercliff," and conjured up to my imagination the vastly better-looking face of our friend the General.

There is a curious sensation, however, in driving over such a wide and trackless level—something, probably, very like to Arctic exploration. Merely taking the West Point Hotel for a landmark, we steered for it, for four miles, over a trackless plain of snow; but the usual speed of Lady Jane seemed of no manner of use without road-side objects by which to measure it. We seemed overcoming no distance, though the plump trotting-haunches over the whipple-tree did their handsomest as usual—a type, I dare say, of the monotony there would be, after all, in success without obstacle.

On reaching Cold Spring, we struck into a well-tracked highway between it and West Point—the cadets and soldiers seeming to make a favorite walk of crossing the river, and pleasure sleighs and loaded teams plying busily backward and forward. To my countryfied eyes, after the winter among plain folks, the population of uniforms, erect figures, and military countenances, made a pleasant variety. It was one of the coldest days of the year, by the way, and how these young "combatants," with their

extremely narrow and unprotective coat-tails, managed to keep warm—two-thirds of those we saw being without any outer garment—perplexed my sympathies to understand.

To reach West Point in half an hour from my own door was very delightful, and I had thus a foretaste of what the drive will be when the proposed road is finished along the shore. It seemed queer to be jingling our Idlewild sleigh-bells along past Cozzens's—a spot only accessible by a steamboat excursion in summer—and my sense of neighborhood is greatly enriched by it. The two great hotels, I must say, however, with their wildernesses of closed windows, looked very lonely and unnatural. The government, I observed, keeps the walks well cleared over the parade-ground, and we met a platoon of snow-shovellers, in uniform, with wooden weapons on shoulder, marching under the command of a corporal, to some new-drifted Sebastopol. There was also a considerate road laid out across the river to Garrison's dock, the safe line between the air-holes indicated by cedar bushes stuck in the snow. I must not forget one consoling glimpse which I got, of the possibility of water—the sun flashing upon the crystal cascades of Dell-Monell, and gleaming down through that wild ravine like a staircase of silver. I glanced also at the coy rock-spring of Font-Anna, which we lingered over in our excursions last summer, but, whatever flow may be

hidden at its heart, the snow over its lovely lip looked pitilessly unyielding.

The fishes in the river, of course, are finding it dark—their world roofed in and covered thickly with double crusts of snow—and I presume, if desires can be prayers, that they are praying for sunshine and open sky. I am sure I join in the prayer. How welcome the spring will be! How delightful to see earth and water again, out of doors! And as to summer and heat, flowers, verdure and foliage—they seem dreams of sweet impossibilities. Meantime, however, let us not be ungrateful for the already lengthening days, and, with the awful prophecy over our heads of the march northward of the summer plague—its next stride possibly from Norfolk to New York—let us thank God for pure air, even with winter.

Yours.

## L E T T E R V.

Use of Love for Dumb Animals—Quinty and his Doom—A stray Dog and his Habits—His death—Dog Insanity, etc.

FEBRUARY, 1855.

FOR those whose destiny it is to die with love or money unspent (my case), there is a certain “small change,” of affectionateness which can only be expended, I find, on dumb animals. Hence my perhaps too frequent call upon you to be interested in the quadrupeds of Idlewild—these recipients of what is left over of victuals and tenderness, forming a part (more or less) of the life I endeavor to describe to you. I appealed to your sympathy last week for our newly domesticated ’possum. In the letter before me I must mention another “varmint” or two—quadruped event, just now, being our principal news and stir. You have *human* event enough to occupy you, I know. But the basement story of your heart (intended for the brute creation and kept closed in city life), requires airing now and then. So come down from “high humanity,” and un-shutter to us, for a minute or two, on the ground floor. It will rest you.

Half-past ten, January 30, and a bitter bright, night—

but, before narrating to you the *death in the moonlight* (which I have hard work not to turn into a poem, by the way), I should explain why our sensibilities, that night, were somewhat more than usual on the alert.

Our "pup," Quinty (Quintessence-of-ugliness being his name, but Quinty for shortness), had been for several days missing. We had not felt altogether comfortable about it, aside from his loss as a play-fellow—for there was a possibility that our family discipline (to make sure of his letting alone "*that 'possum*")<sup>1</sup>, had exceeded the bounds of reason. I had, myself, a reproachful misgiving or two, and the children took Quinty's part altogether—though he was a terrier, "worst kind," and I had done it with a conscientious look at his "ugly mug," and a far reaching view of the temptation after dark, and his probable forgetfulness of himself and his obligations, in a *tête-à-tête*. At any rate, after being whipped prospectively, at the door of the 'possum's house—merely to establish the connection in his mind between whip and 'possum—the pup had "quit." Search through the neighborhood was in vain, and he had been gone, now three days, mournfully justified and regretted.

But, to proceed with the narrative.

Half-past ten, and we were sitting over the embers of the dining-room fire, a slice or two of boiled turkey on the table, and the cares of the day behind us. There was a moan outside. We ran each to a window, and looked out

—clear as noon day it seemed to be, in the intense brilliancy of the moon, and the frozen ground sparkling in the light—but nothing to be seen. We had concluded it must be the fat cook with her nightmare, or my own mare dreaming in the stable, and had returned to the fire, picturing how Quinty might come home at midnight—bleeding and hungry from the cold world to whose mercy he had mistakenly appealed—when up rose the plaintive moan again, with quick repetition—some creature in agony, beyond a doubt—and, seizing my hat, I rushed out, with a whistle of penitent vehemence, and stood listening upon the lawn. All still again.

After a look about among the sharp-edged shadows of the hemlocks, I was turning to the door for a great coat, to make a more leisurely patrol around the premises, when the sound reached me once more, coming evidently from the hill-slope above the stables. I rushed to the spot, and there lay—stretched out and moaning beneath the glaring moon—not Quinty, but the dog of all canine-ity that I wished most dead—neighbor Currie's spotted fox-hound, that kills all our rabbits! Hatred and pity struggled in my breast. I saw in a moment (for I had heard his yelp, at intervals, all day, coming up from the inaccessible remoteness of the glen), that he had chased my innocents till he had run himself to death (as is the nature of the breed), struggling only to reach human succor in his dying

hour. There he lay—his head flung back and his eyes glazed—the open mouth just moving with his moan, and his limbs quivering and extended—and, sympathy apart, I should have preferred, of course, that he would die immediately. But, no

I was at his side in another moment, with a handful of slices of cold turkey which I had snatched from the table—mine enemy forgiven in his extremity, and the delicate meat shoved down into his open throat with eager and trusting finger. No recognition of meat or me! I felt his shrunk loins. They were still slightly warm. But there lay the white meat, unstirred between his loosened jaws, and he was a dog past turkey, it was clear. Poor fellow! Was he conscious and suffering, while he could still struggle and moan?

As I stood looking at the dying creature, wondering at the scene of death under that solemn sky, and admiring the nature that could so pursue its game to the dying gasp, it occurred to me that a dash of cold water, and then the warmth of the kitchen fire, might startle life back into his veins. My man George came up at the moment, and, while he ran for his stable-bucket, I held up the dying dog by the tail, to make it down-hill to his heart and brain; but neither the change of posture nor the dash of water was of any avail. His moan stopped. There was a convulsive movement only in his legs, the spasm of their just

exhausted swiftness. George thought he "ought to be put out of misery." And so thought I. But, of the knocking on the head I did not like to remain and be a spectator.

Whither, upon the moonlight, sped that released energy—that self-sacrificing, single-thoughted devotion? Its toil—its forgetfulness of cold and hunger—had been for another's food. The caught game was left untouched for his master. Did so brave a spirit stop there? I will put a head-stone to the grave where he is left behind—since we must pray for worse company to Heaven.

I was in at my friend the blacksmith's, a day or two after, and Torrey rather favored my idea of dog existence lapping over upon man's immortality—(here and there a dog that was better worth saving than some men, that is to say)—mentioning insanity in the animal as a peculiarity which it shared with our species. He said, however, that a *wolf* had been killed a few nights before, just outside the village; and, by its actions, and a swelling over its brain from some previous blow or bruise, he believed that animal also was insane. The talk ended in our agreeing to walk over to neighbor Clark's farm, under the mountain, the next day, and have a look at the fur and phrenology of the "wild critter"—taking our mutual crony, Chatfield the tanner, along with us, to see whether we could bring home the skin and have it dressed for a relic.

## LETTER VI.

Poetry of Wild Animals in a Neighborhood—An Insane Wolf—His coming down from the Mountains to claim Hospitality—Visit to a Neighbor's to see his Remains—The Irishman's reluctance to confessing having buried him—The disillusion and the “Yaller Dog.”

FEBRUARY, 1855.

In the daily life of every human being, I am inclined to think, there is a background of poetry—some other life, if it is only the spider's web weaving in the corner of a room, where the imagination takes refuge from its own too mere life of things daily and certain. For me, the *wild animals of the neighborhood* furnish that charming poetry of uncertainty. They are growing rarer and rarer, about Idlewild—but we still have venison in plenty, bear's-meat occasionally, now and then a wolf-skin offered for sale, and stories of wild-cats and panthers. With material for thus peopling the bushes through which one rides, in these tangled Highlands, the “price per acre” is blissfully forgotten. One does not count, over again, neighbor Loosepig's litter in the road. The bright green thickets *might* turn out something, as we ride along, besides estimates of bean-poles and fire-wood.

It was this possibility, of something *around us beyond*

*what is seen and saleable*, that made me listen very eagerly to the blacksmith's story of the wolf he believed to be *insane*. That so wild an animal should come down from the mountains, and deliberately claim hospitality—putting his paws up against Farmer Clark's kitchen window, and staying quietly to be killed, while the dog (the biggest Newfoundland in the neighborhood), was afraid to go near him—was explainable only by that unnatural bump noticed afterwards on his brain. So said Torrey, and so hoped I; and, as I said before, I wanted the skin of that "myth," and begged the blacksmith and tanner to come down and dine with me the next day—to walk over afterwards and exhume him, in company that would treat with tenderness both his poetry and peltry.

Farmer Clark lives next door to the Storm-King—"snug up to Butter Hill," as the neighbors would define his position; and, starting from Idlewild soon after dinner, we made a bee-line, across lots, to the mountain. It was one of the bitterest days of that "coldest weather for fifty-eight years," the papers say—(last week)—and the ground was bare. Torrey's shop being a sort of shanty of shrunk boards, through the cracks of which he keeps up his acquaintance with the winds pretty well, and Chatfield following an out-door business, they found it warmer walking than I did, probably; though my principal embarrassment was the difficulty of laughing at Torrey's stories as we went

along; the first six breaths in the open air having stiffened my moustache into a curry-comb, and any sudden movement of the lips very painful. On one farm that we passed (it was among the tall blacksmith's early reminiscences), there used to live a tough old grinder of the poor, who slept with one eye open to guard his apples. Out of respect to his age, the boys did not like to stone him (when he jumped out of bed and gave chase without stopping to dress, at the first barking of the dog), but they armea themselves one night, each with a shingle cut into the shape of what the school-marm used to call her "spanker," and, laying a rail to trip up the old gentleman on a soft place, they run him out of breath and then led the chase across it. When he was down, they availed themselves of the *easy* access to his sensibilities, held his sharp nose to the grass and administered school justice. As the nearest instance of Western Lynch law to the Eastern sea-board, which had ever come to my knowledge, I thought the mention of this little statistic might be of interest to the future historian.

The grand mountain, whose tangled side rose seventeen hundred feet in an almost perpendicular wall before us, was full of bear-stories, of course. Torrey gave us several poetical ones he had heard—better than the *librettos* of most operas any one of them, but this letter is to be limited to poetry with an eye-witness.

Neighbor Clark's big dog came out, as we approached the gate; but, though it was he who had seen the wolf and doubtless remembered him, he was of that unhappy class who cannot impart their feelings. We inquired for his master. He had gone to New York, but "Jemmy," who shot the wolf, was in the shanty, farther down the road; and so we kept on to Jemmy's.

But our pilgrimage to the tomb of the insane hero was to have other obstacles. Jemmy ignored the whole business! His friend, a brother Paddy, had been prosecuted for killing a dog that bothered his cow, a short time before—damages twenty-one dollars and fifty cents—and he was not going to confess to anything "*in this quare country*," till it was "proved on him." We were lawyers, hunting up evidence; he knew that. And there stood Jemmy, with his teeth shut tight together. If our neighbor the miller had not chanced to drive up, and agreed to "stand between Jemmy and all harm," we should have had no clue to the mortal remains to which we had come to do honor.

On a slight elevation in the potato-field, behind the barn, Jemmy was soon at work with his pick-axe. He had "put him under about two feet, on a wet day;" but it was like hammering granite, now, the ground was so frozen into rocks. We looked on (we three, and the miller, whose curiosity was awakened), standing under the lee of

the barn, and keeping our enthusiasm as warm as was any way possible; but the wolf coming to light again so reluctantly, that I should have liked to consult some "table" (in a warm room), as to whether his spirit thought posthumous renown worth while. Sleeping in his grave, thus far, in respectable uncertainty, it was hazardous, at least (we might have been kindly considerate enough to reflect), to subject him, a second time, to the scrutinies of a well-peppered immortality.

It was suggested, at last, that we should find a warmer place in which to await the resurrection; and, Chatfield agreeing to stay and see that the body was got out of the frozen ground without bruising, we went into the house, where Mrs. Clark gave us a kind welcome among her children around the fire. "Further particulars," naturally. The night was dark when the wolf came—his jump at the window very nearly dashing it in—his eyes glaring through the gloom outside—the blow Mr. Clark gave the stranger quietly submitted to, but even the big dog quite scared with his still way of sitting and looking, and Jemmy sent for with his gun. They had buried him without looking at him much, and were not sure it was a wolf—but his behavior was very unlike any tame creature.

The announcement came, at last—the sepulchre was open. We bundled out, quite glowing and comfortable,

to see the dead whom our hero-worship had so perseveringly snatched from oblivion. Jemmy stood warm over his pick-axe. Chatfield looked mum. The open grave was there; and, beside it (in Torrey's words of disappointment), "*a small yaller dog!*" They all recognized him. He had been a vagrant cur about the village for some time—too poor to be owned or pitied—and, in the extremity of cold and starvation, probably, had so lost his reason as to lay his paws against the window, while he looked in at the family around their supper-table by their blazing fire. If our interest in the poor dog had been a little earlier! If a crust had been given him while living, as freely as the half-dollar for digging him up when he was dead! We stood rebuked over the frozen carcass, from which we had thus stripped the poetic mystery to see only the cold dull sorrows. Poor "yaller dog!"

Torrey insisted, as we walked home to tea, that his other "myths" of the mountains were more founded on fact, and he has promised me a collection of skins—wolf, fox, bear, raccoon ('possum we have, for our poor fellow died last night), wild-cat, panther and wood-chuck—in the course of the season. There is a wild race of woodsmen in the mountains behind us, who will be glad to bring them down for a trifle. Between covering a sofa and carpeting a bedroom, I shall be a cus-

tomer for the hunter—"the meat his'n," as my friend says,  
and the poetry mine.

Pardon the length of this story of an afternoon's walk,  
my dear general, and believe me

Yours.

## L E T T E R   V I I .

Pilgrimage across the River—Two miles on the Ice—Polypus Island—Its Unsuspected Capabilities—Billy Babcock and his Hat—The Sonnet to the Hat, etc. etc.

MARCH, 1855.

We quite out-Williams-and-Stevens you, to-day—a plate of solid crystal stretching from Idlewild meadows clear across the Hudson—a two-mile mirror of dazzling ice, almost without a flaw. Since this extreme cold, our broad bay has been solid enough for an army to pass—foot, baggage, artillery and dragoon—and, with the sudden rain, succeeded by as sudden cold again, the somewhat rough surface has glazed over in a breathless calm. Such a spread of looking-glass into landscape—pond-ice into prairie of crystal—makes a curious demand upon the fancy for more room; a poetical influence of which a glove-stretcher is the modest prose. It affects me like the barrel of writing ink, which I saw at the apothecary's in Newburgh, the other day—wanting quite a new-sized thought to realize what was thus comprehensively hooped in. Two miles square of polished ice, framed in Highlands! I trust the moon appreciates her new looking-glass.

Yesterday afternoon we made a family pilgrimage across the frozen river, the children on skates, with "Lion" (my boy's sled), to bring back any lady for whom the four miles of slippery walking might prove too much, and myself on a pair of neighbor Ward's "clamps"—the sharpened shoe-points with which he goes near the edges of the floating ice-slabs, in drawing his winter nets. Ward himself kindly accompanied us; for, though sleigh-teams have crossed, during the past week, the "air-holes" have a covering scarce thicker than tissue paper, and it needs a practised eye not to run upon them unexpectedly, especially with the glaze of the sunshine on the polished surface. At twenty spots which our friend struck with his pole, it dropped through with its mere weight, and we made quite a zig-zag course in avoiding the "skeary-looking places." These air-holes are worn by curves in the current, or by the entrance of tributary streams with warmer spring-water, or by the working of ice-slabs underneath. The "suck under" is strong with the tide, and a dip dangerous.

My main object of curiosity was to visit *Polypus Island*, which lies close to the opposite shore, and which makes a break for us in the music of every rail-train, intercepting also, for a minute, the sight of every long line of cars. This rocky mass, with a surface of perhaps four or five acres, and near a hundred feet high, is scarce visitable in summer, being a

sort of Alsatia, where doubtful company finds a haunt islanded from control and interruption. We passed by the island in reaching the opposite shore—where we desired, first, to bring away a commemorative pebble (from Irving's side of the river), and, second, to stand close to the track while a train went by at speed (a sensation missed by a mere *depot* acquaintance with railroads), and, these points successfully achieved, we made for the Polypus.

How capabilities are dwarfed and beauties obscured by distance! I had supposed this to be a round and barren rock, fruitful in nothing but cactus and mosses, with at most a whortle-berry bush that could find place to root. But here was an indented glen, opening to the south, and in which could be placed a cottage invisible from either shore; and all around this hollow, and up among the cliffs, were the vigorous shoots of hickories and cedars that must have once heavily shaded the whole island, and which are now cropped by marauders as periodically as they attain a size worth stealing. Through the hickory brush, six or seven feet high, we could hardly make our way on the southern side. With its original (perhaps still cultivable) shade, and for a tenant who wanted only an *idle wild*, with neither grounds nor garden to trouble him, it might be a most independent little snuggery—its ring fence (of water) kept in repair by Nature, its stone seats moss-cushioned without expense, and the fish coming of them-

selves to his front door. And then with yourself (at Undercliff) within a mile or two; Weir the painter in full view; the gifted authoress of the "Wide, Wide World," two islands below; and the Storm King *and me* just opposite, I think we may speak well of the "society of the place." Send along a Polypso!

You will have understood, by this chronicle of our trip, that we made a safe return; my tired wife, however, accepting the hospitality of her boy's sled; and myself somewhat heavier at both extremities—a hat-full of evergreen plants, which fair hands had plucked from the island, and a bootful of water from a slip of one leg into an air-hole. With the strong wind having full play against us on the smooth ice, our headway was greatly retarded, coming back, and we realized how the much lamented roughness of our daily paths may have their unacknowledged uses, after all—deadening, unseen, the sweeping blast of opposition.

I may as well correct, while I think of it, a mistake in the name of the centenarian—Babcock—whose application for a Revolutionary pension, I commended, in one of my letters to your Washington influence. I wrote it "*Isaac*" (a mistake very natural, as that is the name of *his son*, who is the *next oldest man* in the country hereabouts), but his name is *William*—"Billy Babcock" his common designation.

The honors that are being paid to *Billy's hat*, by the way, are mournfully suggestive. You remember I got it from him in a swap. He had worn it from his ninety-ninth year to his one hundred and third. But though thus worn, across the isthmus between two centuries, and by an old head still jolly and vagrant, it had received cold victuals like any previous hat, and was near being left off—simply because used up—without even mention in story. Now—it is receiving visits from the clergy and sonnets from the ladies! Our high-church rector has called—with his white neckcloth and stately manners—to see Billy's hat. A lady, hundreds of miles away, has sent me a sonnet—to Billy's hat! But how close its shave upon pitiless oblivion! What a mere thread of mention (in gossip between me and the blacksmith while my pony was shod) fished back that old hat's fading existence (*felt* as it had been) from the void of not-worth-owning-ness—past nail to hang upon! With the risk it has thus run in your mind, read the sonnet to what is now (you see!) a shrine of pilgrimage for the clergy and the muses:

“ Strange have thy fate and wanderings been,  
Old torn and tattered felt ‘ chapeau,’  
It were a busy brain, I trow,  
Could fancy half that thou hast seen !  
Now trav’ling merrily along,  
Sheltering the gay old veteran’s head,  
Or pillow of his out-door bed.

How could a hat have greater wrong?  
But rescued by a poet's hand,  
(None but the bard hath seen thy worth),  
Henceforth, take thou thine honored stand,  
Among the mighty ones of earth!  
I envy thee thy place of rest,  
At Idlewild, thou honored guest!"

A HOME JOURNALIST.

*Bristol, Pennsylvania, January 22, 1855.*

And with this installment of myself as a gate-keeper of  
immortality (send along your friends with their old hats !)  
I will close my cold-February letter.

Yours.

## LETTER VIII.

Pleasure of doing a Thing for the First Time—Meeting of Politicians on the Road, bound to a Meeting—Asked to go and make a Speech—The Disadvantage of the Counsellor's handsome Boots—My Speech in Favor of dividing the County, etc., etc.

MARCH, 1855.

THERE are many things we like to have *done just once*—not to die in ignorance and go to another planet where there may be no such thing—and my country life is newly enriched, at present, with one such experience. I may mention it, for I was surprised into it, and shall probably never do so any more ; and the historian, besides, may like to be helped to the fact: *I have made a speech at a political meeting!* You will think at once of a pump giving out water from the handle—my refreshment for the thirsty world finding its way from the wells of thought, habitually, by quite another channel—but, listen to my confession :

With the morning's pucker of work to unkink, and an hour-ago's dinner to remind of its more active duties, I was galloping over the snow towards Newburgh, (three P.M., February 10, 1855), as mere a republic of animals, me and my horse, as ever formed themselves into “united states”—the majority (of legs) however, as usual, not having the

upper hand. At a fork of the road, the minority (that wore the spurs) came to a halt, to let pass a double sleigh. In it were several of the leading Newburghers, bound to the village beyond, to attend a public meeting—one that had been announced for the discussion of the present vexed question—*whether the County should be divided*. “Would I go?”—“vote wanted probably, countenance certainly”—“owed it to neighbors to take part in their public interests”—“supercilious not to”—“duty to country at large”—“health and exercise second to patriotic obligations.” Well—yes, I would!—(though I had never in my life been to a political meeting, and did not know whether it was opened with a hymn or the reading of the Declaration of Independence)—for once, I would!

As I trotted along after the big sleigh, I took rather a more general view than ever before of my dependencies as a one-vote inhabitant. Equi-distant from three villages, Cornwall, Canterbury and Moodna (a mile, say, from Idlewild to each), we are subject, of course, to three times the usual amount of “local influences,” most of which, thus far, have been very agreeable—including even the road-labor claimed exclusively by each of the three Path-masters, and amounting, all three, to no more than this branch of public indifference seems to me to require. The three sets of village gossip, at whose triple mercy we are, treat us tenderly, I believe—perhaps because we might

appeal from a severe one to the other more merciful two. To a coroner from either one, in case my vicious horse succeeds in his ardent endeavors, I trust I should be sadly welcome. Of the two plump and popular Bonifaces of Cornwall and Canterbury (for Moodna, though it has three factories and a post-office, has no public house), I enjoy the jolly friendship, with ungrudged use of tie-post and any other stand-up-for-me that occasion may require, I have every reason to suppose. The village tailor of Canterbury, who has made all my clothes for the last three years, is my friend, I know—and to be counted as two, for he and his goose are the oracles of the neighborhood in their showy emporium of the Fashions. With the freighting interests on the river, the lumber and butter interests “up back,” the influential storekeepers, and the spontaneous boys (who, in all three villages, have treated me with affectionate familiarity from the beginning), I think I have my share of political and county influence. On the whole, I was rather pleased with the character of the virgin vote I was about to give, and trusted that the bridegroom question, under such softening power, would soothe down into a spirit of love and accommodation.

The village looked quite astir around the tavern as the sleigh ahead of me jingled up. There was a spare post, where my horse could amuse himself with Scott's plate of the Fashions in the tailor's window, while the sunshine

added its persuasion to the tie-strap in keeping him quiet; and, leaving there this dictatable and unrepublican half of my usual identity, I crossed over to my twenty-millionth of duties as an unmounted republican—mentally apologizing to my country, of course, for the two monarchical spurs, which I trusted would escape notice, and which made my heels contradict the republican respect for the majority.

Public spirit was very lively among the decanters as I entered the bar-room, and a large majority of those present were addressing their fellow citizens. The shake of hands I found quite unanimous; and, the republic thus recognized all around, we turned to the opposite door, where John Synes, the rosy landlord of Cornwall, stood announcing that all was ready. He led the way, and America followed up two pair of stairs. The meeting was to be held in the garret, that being the largest room in the house and appropriated usually to any chance overflowings of company—the “double beds” being of indefinite accommodation, either for sleepers or sitters-down. Seeing a stupendous brass knocker on the *inside* of the door, I inquired its use, and found that the garret was used also as a Freemason’s Lodge; though what secret is hidden under a brass knocker which communicates information only to those outside, I did not very definitely understand. As the crowd poured in, I found a comfortable seat for myself on a wooden bench, under the corner of the roof, and the

Public being distributed about among the beds and other furniture, we voted in a Chairman and Secretary, and proceeded to business.

The question was the proposed division of the county, or the creation of a new *Highland County*, which should have Newburgh for its county town. Old Orange County, with Goshen for its official capital, is something like many an English family under the law of primogeniture, where the eldest son (Goshen with fifteen hundred inhabitants) has all the honor of consideration, while a younger son (Newburgh with twelve thousand inhabitants) is bigger and worthier. Americans-like, the people begin to fret at this perpetuation of a superiority unsupported by its original claim. But, besides this republicanism of the question, the Highland corner of the county wants the change for convenience. Newburgh is on the river—Goshen twenty miles back. We go to Newburgh with our produce and business every day—to Goshen only when compelled as jurymen or litigants at law. With courts and records at Newburgh, we should save the expense and travel to that out of the way town in the back country, besides having a handsomer county town six times as big, and named after the green *Highlands* that inclose us, instead of after a Prince of *Orange*, whose memory smelt mouldy, long ago.

Of course there was an opposition. The Goshen interest, and the lawyers, whose fees and field are larger in pro-

portion to the remoteness and inconvenience, had been stirring early. Two ideas—(quite as many at a time as the mind of here and there a man has room for)—had been industriously whispered about—one addressed to the pride, and the other to the pocket. “A bigger county-town was going to cost more,” and “Newburgh was trying to lord it over all the little towns, and they shouldn’t stand it.”

As usual, the more reasonable side had taken the least precaution; and Newburgh had done the unwise thing to send down her best dressed and most aristocratic-looking lawyer to address the meeting. As counsellor Hasbrouck stepped in front of the stove at the motion “made and seconded” by my friend Synes, I was sorry that there was no concealment for his boots—for they were of a supercilious shape and slenderness that was very little likely to help the question. Of the political influence of such trowsers and cravat as formed a visible portion of his address, I had a similarly sad misgiving. He commenced most winningly and deprecatingly, however, and, in a speech of half an hour, (during which he replied courteously to the tall stone-mason who built one of my gates, and who walked up and down the room with his hat on, expressing his unqualified disapprobation), he made the advantages of the proposed division reasonably incontrovertible. We Storm-King-ers, particularly, I thought, were shown to be the gainers by the change.

As the elegant counsellor retired once more behind the stove in the corner, there was a call from the chairman for any opposite-minded gentleman who might be inclined to express his opinion. No one answered. Our herculean stone-mason "had the floor," promenading between the big bed and the front of the table, but he was only eloquent in interruption. The Cornwall butcher's fearful elbow was nudged, but he was "not feeling very well." All of a sudden, my friend Synes, the Secretary, up and looked over to our side, and—before I could catch my breath—he "moved and seconded unanimously," that I should address the meeting. Oh, John Synes! And, after all my sympathy, when your tavern on the dock was half washed away with that last year's water-spout! But it will not happen again—either avalanche—I trust!

My first sensation, when the blood at my heart got upon its legs again, was a staggering of my individual permanency under so many expecting eyes. I felt going to disappear. I had not, at that moment, the slightest intention of complying with my fellow countrymen's flattering thunder-clap. With a look downward, however, to collect courage to express my thanks and excuses, I caught sight of my boots—boots with no disparagement of another man's boots in them, it struck me at a glance—and I heard the call of my country! Why had Counsellor Hasbrouck's undeniable argument been received with dissent visible in

all faces? *It was his boots!* I had seen it! Patriotism—poured ever so glowingly over the tops of such better-than-you-sirs—was not for republican acceptation. It must come from other boots to be recognized and trusted. Mine were there—born for the crisis—twenty-shilling democracy in their very look. By such as these, rescued and borne aloft, the same prostrated banner might wave triumphantly. I felt the mission—in *toe-toe* and to the bottom of my *soles*!

There was quite a silence as I stepped forward. Scarce a man present between whom and me there was not a reciprocal knowledge of the length of axle-tree, from daily turnings-out, on the road—yet, accustomed as I was to see most of them with their hats on, their now bare heads looked unfamiliarly awful. “Ladies and Gentlemen,” I tried to say, but my voice did not arrive, probably from not being accustomed to bring sentiments from so low down—no pen to twirl for an idea, and my heart being altogether in my boots. There was a second’s eternity of embarrassment. I looked at the big mason with his opposition hat on, and felt worse. Far off in a corner, however, stood my friend Hixon the Moodna blacksmith, who had once devotedly jumped in among the legs of my runaway horses when they brought up against the corner of the bridge, and, with the sight of his tranquil face and the memory of those disentangled traces, my thoughts rallied.

He was the "all right" to my powers of speech, as to my sleigh-full of children half tilted into the river. I magnetically took his word for it, as before, and "went ahead."

Of my speech, modesty, of course, forbids me to furnish you with a report. I MADE ONE. That fact, as an un-omitted experience on this planet, is enough for me. Posterity should have sent a reporter if it wished to know more of it. I may confess, however, to being a *little* surprised, that, in the account of the meeting, in the Newburgh papers, the next day, my speech was not even alluded to! Happily for my feelings, the brass knocker and the mason with his hat on were also unmentioned. To furnish history with the niche, however, where my statue as an orator is to be placed, I will add to this letter the paragraph from the *Newburgh Gazette* announcing the occasion :

"HIGHLAND COUNTY.—*The Voice of the People!*—At a meeting of the citizens of the town of Cornwall, held at the house of J. H. LANE, pursuant to the call of the town Committee, on Saturday afternoon, February 10th, 1855, for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of creating a new county, to be called Highland County, the following resolutions, offered by N. P. WILLIS, Esq., were adopted:

"Resolved, That it is expedient, in point of economy, that the town of Cornwall should be associated in the proposed new county of Highland.

"Resolved, That county lines should be so defined as to subserve the best interests of those inhabitants included within its territories, and that the proposed new county of Highland will greatly facilitate the inhabitants of the town of Cornwall in trans-

acting the regular county business, by bringing the county-seat in close proximity to the inhabitants.

"J. Y. SYNES, Sec'y.

J. O. ADAMS, Ch'n."

Of course, my handing in one of those resolutions need not to be mentioned in any "Ode by George P. Morris" on the subject. Written on the top of a hat, they are, to an editor's eye, "miscellaneous." And, indeed, as to the effect of my eloquence, I should rather you would press down your valve till we know whether the question is to be carried. Perhaps they will have a Highland County without the Highlands; leaving us down here in a corner, like a stale end of *orange-peel*—the majestic Storm King and Cro'nest, republican mountains as they are, namesakes of a Prince of Orange! Boots of all kinds forbid!

Begging for any little side-influence you can bring to bear, my dear General, and trusting soon to be able to date from a "*Highland County*" as well as to live in one,

I remain, yours, etc.

## L E T T E R I X.

Charm of Early Spring—Philosophy of Work as Overseer—Kindling Woods—  
The Skunk and his Flesh and Habits—The Monument to the Czar—A curious  
Stump coming down with the Freshet—Quinty's Fear of it, etc., etc.

MARCH, 1855.

SUMMER is a lady-mistress whom you city-folks marry without a courtship—losing, as you do, the bits of summer (without leaves) in early spring. Such a morning as this—March the 16th—is one of those stolen tendernesses before full possession—the air as soft and timidly genial as an arm half put around you, and the sense of novelty and unexpectedness (it seems to me), giving a thrill to some inner octave of nerves that is overpowered by the prodigality of June. To-morrow there will very likely be a snow-storm, and *you* will congratulate yourself on not being in the country; but *I* shall have had this half-yielding caress—a promise of Summer, which is, in itself, a happiness, as it is a happiness to have the promise of heaven in the incomplete beauty of a child. In one of your letters, I remember, you say you are “principled altogether against any anticipation of income”—but there are a few nice things, such as love, summer and money, that

owe half their value to those forbidden anticipations. How about dawns—and new moons—and foretastes of heaven?

For work and exercise, this is a finer temperature than that of the more admired season. I have taken advantage of the moderately bracing air to join my men in the clearing-out of dead-wood and brush, to give the trees of our wild ravine a better chance. Not that I am much of a hand at work. Fatigue is another word for nonentity, with me. At the first sign of it, spirits and brain “up shutters” and close the shop. But I love to be strong by deputy—standing about (with a hatchet in my hand for identity’s sake) and exercising my will, at out-door labor, through a couple of manly spines for which I do not, at the same time, supply the marrow. Here and there a tree, I do the trimming of, to keep warm—linking to it, thereby, one of those comfortably-sized memories with which a grove (which is to be a haunt for relaxation), should be alone peopled. And I have found to-day that the mere weight of my presence could be turned to account—Bell calling on me, every few minutes, to “hang on” to a wild grapevine, which the weight of no single Neal Dow could drag down from the upper branches of the tree it was killing. I learned also, to my comfort, that Nature publishes some volumes, with many leaves, which are not intended to be of any posthumous value—“the white poplar,” Bell declares, “not lasting three moonlight nights after it is cut

down." Even with such speedy decay, however, it throws a pleasant shade while it flourishes; and so, white poplar literature, recognized as a class in nature, should have its brief summer of indulgence.

On our way through the woods, my 'possum-catcher stepped off to take a look at his steel-trap set at a hole in a rock, for a certain animal that adds "perfume to the violet." With a south wind we hear from one, lately; and fearing that it betokens ammunition held in readiness for our dog, Quinty (whom we love too well, since his return, to see exposed to combat which involves exile, even with victory), we are trying the "concealed weapon" system of hostilities, instead of fairer warfare; and, to tell the truth, a mere offence to the nose does not seem wholly to justify it. The skunk has his good qualities. "The genus," says Natural History, "*is exclusively American.* He inhabits most parts of North America, and, though celebrated for the intolerable stench which he discharges when threatened with danger, he is at other times not at all unpleasant. If killed while unsuspecting of danger, the offending glands being carefully removed, the flesh may be eaten, and is said to be well flavored. The skunk seems to be perfectly aware of its powers of defence, and takes no pains to avoid man or other animals." In this character (not wholly detestable, it seems to me), there is stuff which deserves at least open dog and gun; and I was rather relieved when Bell

came back disappointed. By the marks on the snow, the skunk had walked all round the trap, but the bit of pork was still unmeddled with, and the "exclusive American" unassassinated.

You will be surprised to hear, that a chance fate, almost unassisted, has erected, in a beautiful cypress grove at Idlewild, a monument to the Czar. It was done the day after we received the news of the emperor's death, and (obituary promptness, freshness of interest and all), I think I may venture to describe the event rather circumstantially. I should not be surprised, indeed, if, for the next twenty years, this auto-cenotaph were the principal curiosity of the neighborhood. Will you hear the story?

The snow-storm which I predicted in the beginning of this letter (three days ago), came duly on the morning of the 17th. It spoilt my day's ride ; for, with the moisture and hail, the snow happened to be of just that clayey consistency which comes perhaps but once in a winter, but which "balls" in the horse's hoofs so as to set him on intermittent stilts and make his footing very insecure. No comfort in the saddle—but, how to get exercise and fresh air ? It must be some sort of *work*, for the walking was as bad as the riding, and, in that coldizzle of rainy east wind, the blood must be kept well astir.

I told Judge Clumsy (the six-year old roses on whose cheeks were interested in the question, and who stood

looking out of the window very wistfully, after being all day in doors), that it would never do to knock under to the weather. It would be an admission that country-life in winter had its unhealthy imprisonments. His honor suggested immediately that we should go out and "coast"—but the only attitude he patronizes on his sled ("belly-flumps") is slightly apoplectic, at my time of life, as well as a little too head-foremost, down the sides of a ravine like ours, for the utter incautiousness of the Judge's general navigation. His proposal, however, suggested a project. A *stone-boat* would run glibly over such shallow snow! That ugly stump brought down by the great flood of last year and lodged in the meadow—immovable on bare ground except with two yoke of oxen, and then with great tearing-up of sod—what a chance to get rid of it! Boots for two!

Our men were in the stable, taking advantage of a wet day to oil harness and grind the tools; and Miss Bell (a draught mare so named as the maid-of-all-work, and in compliment to Bell's getting her—the ever-consenting creature—for as little as forty-seven dollars and fifty cents) was chewing up her crib, from *ennui*. All hands were ready for even a wet job, we saw by the readiness to get out of doors; and, in a few minutes we were on our way down the Simplon of the ravine, the Judge astride of one of the crow-bars on the drag, and we other three pottering cheerfully after through the snow.

We trifled about, for a while, drawing off drift-logs and rubbish, till Miss Bell (with His Honor on her back to keep her down to her work), got warm and willing, and then we made a halt before our more formidable customer. It was an oak stump, that, somewhere up stream, had been dug out with great labor and made the centre of a brush-heap for burning. But fire had only burnt off its bark and blackened it, and it had been rolled into the bed of the stream, where it had lain probably for years. The unprecedented deluge that washed away so many houses and hills last year, lifted it, at last; and coming along with the flood, and tumbling over our cascades, it lodged directly opposite a grove of thirty tall cedars in the centre of the meadow—prophetic selection of spot for a monument (Nature getting up a committee of showers to do the cartage of the material) which I had the usual human short-sightedness not to see through at all. With the Czar so uncommonly alive as he was at the time, indeed, and the statue lying on the ground, tail upwards and unrecognizable, there was excuse, perhaps, for everything but my hateful resemblance to mankind in my lack of pre-explanatory faith.

Bell doubted whether we were going to move the stump; but, at any rate, he thought we had better first try to turn it over, so that it would tip easy—the knee-planks of the new stone-boat being a present from our aristocratic neigh-

bor Charles Morton, and the butt-end (of "Old Nic" that was presently to be revealed to us) likely to come down upon our friend's knees with a smash. The crowbars were fixed accordingly, with a stone pry, and a heave taken. "No go." Bob and I then took the levers, Bell put his shoulder to it, and the Judge held his breath. Now then—muscle and magnetism all together—up with him!—and—over he went. But, what? Quinty the dog was off, suddenly, with his tail between his legs! The two men burst into roars of laughter! I had not given it a second glance myself, but, turning at the noise, I looked—dropped crowbar and felt a creeping sensation down my spine! From Russia, straight—by all that was wonderful! Head, mouth, eyes, teeth, form, expression—with attitude exactly as seen, squat on the ground, in every picture-book—THE POLAR BEAR! I had, that morning, read the news of the Emperor's death. The spectre was on the stump before us!

To fulfill the manifest destiny of that funeral monument was of course the pious remainder of our afternoon's work. Accommodating Fate had pointed out time, place and material, for the job, I walked around the grove and selected the highest spot of ground for the pediment. There was a mossy knoll on the southern side, where the Emperor would first catch the eye of strangers as they cross the little bridge over Funnychild brook, and where he would improve on their admiring vision as the approach through

the meadow road brings the profile into stronger relief. I felt a little superstitious about the way he should look. As to pointing his open mouth towards *my* Turkey-yard, the thought distressed me. Yet to turn that Sebastopol phiz towards the Stamboul of another man's barn was scarcely kind. To divide the evil omen seemed best—and between better men than I—such as keep old Nic and his appropriating claws at a safer distance—say half that devouring glare turned towards neighbor Crane, the retired clergyman on the hill, and half towards Friend Sands the Quaker preacher just below, both too sainted and venerable to fear harm while angels are about. So, monument to a usurping emperor though it be—Peace and Prayer stand united where he looks.

I trust our polar bear will frighten no good man's horse. The evidence that he looks pokerishly supernatural is in the trouble we had to get Quinty—the bravest of terriers and brought up among stumps and logs—to go anywhere near the monster. He half howled when ordered to come to us as we stood in the edge of the grove, and every hair on his body stood raised with fear. After half an hour's coaxing, however, he got within smell of the wood and then down went his hair and he expressed his opinion of a dead emperor—as dogs, since Launcelot Gobbo's, are likely to do.

To turn from sepulchral bears to living “lions,” we have

had WHIPPLE here; and (after his wondering look at the Czar, to whose cypress cenotaph he was the distinguished first pilgrim) we followed him to Newburgh to hear him lecture on "Cheerfulness"—not an inapt subject, I think, even for a funeral discourse. It was of Whipple's cast of thought—breadth and suggestive as his great Websterian eyes—and a full and appreciative audience gave him breathless attention. I could send you thoughts from it, but he is to deliver it again, probably, and should have the first use of what is so entirely his own.

Judge Clumsy's compliments to you, with this history of his first lesson in monumental honors, and I remain

Yours.

## LETTER X.

Visit from Old Billy Babcock—His Breakfast and Memories—Billy's Daguerreotype—Honoring Gift of a Coat to him—Sam B. Ruggles's Impulse, etc. etc.

JULY, 1855.

AN old slouched hat, with a twine around it, hangs on the gilt peak of our dining-room mirror, as you doubtless remember. It is a venerable relic of longevity—old Billy Babcock having worn it across the threshold of a second century—cost thirty-seven and a half cents, and in constant use from his ninety-ninth to his one hundred and third year. To obtain this brain-bridge between two centuries as a relic, I made an even “swop” with him, last summer, (as I described in one of these Idlewild letters), little expecting to see again, in this world, either the grey old head or my own promoted hat.

We were lingering over our breakfast, yesterday morning (July 3d), the two or three pleasant friends who are with us having run their gossip deep into the forenoon, when a shout from the children drew our attention to the window, and there came old Billy, stumping along through the pine grove with his peeled stick—his rags and perpetual smile in happy contradiction as before, but his prominent

chin covered with a snow-white beard, which gleamed with a very new and becoming splendor from the confusion of his unwashed perpetuities. The announcement of who was coming was at once understood—the very bad hat on its gilt peak effectually daily-fying the mention and memory of the old man—and the first to run and welcome him at the door was a fair lady in most amusing contrast to his build and belongings, the elegant “La Penserosa,” in the prettiest of French caps and flowing *négligés*, her morning toilette as eloquent of the Present as he and his toggery of the Past.

Billy had walked twelve miles that morning (in his one hundred and third year, remember!) and had had no breakfast. He was soon fed and made comfortable, and then we ensconced him in an easy-chair and gathered around him—one of our friends, fortunately, being a walking hydraulic of History and Statistics, and pumping the far-down memory of the old man with the pipe and valve of well-adjusted question and data. His memories of Washington and the military operations on the Hudson, of the battle of Stony Point and of the hanging of André, and his impressions of the various great men who figured before his eyes in the days now passed over to History, were skillfully drawn up. Our friend (Sam. B. Ruggles) was delighted with the old veteran’s pertinacious and simple truthfulness, never allowing a question to lead him into an admission of what was not

perfectly clear in his own mind, and denying many suppositions of knowledge which were made for him and which it would have added to his consequence to be possessed of. He was honest and direct as if he had never thought of being anything else—a saving of trouble which was perhaps among the reasons for his lasting so long.

Mr. Ruggles proposed, after a while, that we should ask the Sun, that had shone so long upon Billy, to oblige us with his likeness; and, on explaining to the veteran what his old friend Daylight had learned to do, of late years, he consented at once, though with an amusing expression of reserved faith in the matter. Up in the mountains, where Billy is a vagrant, daguerreotypes were probably never heard of; and he evidently thought that he had seen his own shadow long enough to know all the sun could do in *that* line!

We soon had the ponies at the door, and hoisted in the old man—his peeled stick and tattered shirt in *alto relieveo* on the back seat, and about a century's difference between his age and that of my boy, who sat beside him. The day was not too warm, and the drive along the river to Newburgh was very delightful. Billy, probably (riding along so respectably now), was not even remembering my agonizing encounter with him, a year ago, on the same road—the old sinner staggering home drunk, in my virtuous trowsers, given him the day before! I should mention, by

the way, that my last summer's hat, which came back upon the old man's head yesterday, after a year's wear, has a considerably altered expression. He had, as usual, slept out of doors occasionally, and the hat, which is his pillow, serves him also for a cold-victual basket, and a cushion in wet places ; but the wear of this trying variety of service was not all. He had found the crown "too high to go through the woods with;" and, cutting off the lower half, he had reduced it to the proportions of a soup-plate—more convenient than becoming. I mention it to protect myself from its doing me injustice (as I am told the trowsers are doing) in a collection of autographs.

Miracle as the taking of likenesses by daguerreotype certainly is, the process—especially on the scale practised in rural villages—has no very startling aspect of sublimity. The alchemistic hierophant of the sun's great mystery—(the man who daguerreotypes you)—goes about it with a commonplaceness tedious to endure, ludicrous to remember. Billy was simply acquiescent. His business was to oblige the friend who was to give him a dinner and some old clothes after the job was over ; but as to understanding or believing in likenesses painted that way, he was not going even to try. The look of funny incredulity which this feeling of mere acquiescence naturally gave to his features, was faithfully copied, of course, in the daguerreotype. It adds to the effectiveness of it as a picture, though it

impairs somewhat the character of frank simplicity of his every-day expression.

The daguerreotypist was somewhat embarrassed with a subject in shirt-sleeves, the unusual prevalence of white disturbing his experience in light and shade. The various trials, before he could satisfy himself, occupied nearly an hour, during the whole of which tiresome period and process, Billy sat patient and motionless—wide awake, but with not a nerve restless or discomposed. The man expressed his wonder at the self-command of his old sitter and at the steadiness with which he looked straight at him as directed while the plate was under the action of the light. Indeed, that the tough system of the centenarian has had no experience of neuralgic wear—that he is a man born without nerves—is, I fancy, one of the secrets of his longevity. To this and his inexhaustible good-humor may mainly be attributed, I have no doubt, his duration under all sorts of hard usage by poverty and exposure.

A man one hundred and three years old, seeing his own likeness for the first time, was a dramatic moment, I thought—but Billy evidently did not feel the poetry of it. I held up the naked plate to him, and he said, “Why, it *is* like me!” with a sort of reluctant acknowledgment of surprise, but immediately felt about for his hat, “to be going,” glad it was over. He was not up to giving his mind the trouble to comprehend it, and if I was pleased he was very

glad, and I was very welcome. This was what his manner said, as we hobbled him down-stairs to the street and got once more under way for home.

But the sun's taking Billy's likeness was not to be his only honor for that day. We had brought him safely back and refreshed his inner man and given him his expected bundle. The ladies and children were about taking leave of him—his long stick in hand and his face turned towards the mountains where he is to vagrantize for the summer—when it occurred to him to turn and inquire, whether, in that closely-tied and yet unexamined bundle, there happened to be a *coat*. The old chap's sagacity had smelt out the weak spot in my charity. *There was no coat.* The fact was, I had looked over my slender remainders of that article, in making up the parcel, and there was nothing I could well spare except a dress coat, for which I have no further occasion in my hermit life, but which would scarce be “a fit” for Billy, besides the proba-Billy-ty of his swopping it for grog at the first wood-chopper's shanty in the mountains. No! I had it to confess to the old man that his feel of the weight of the bundle had told him truly. It was composed only of the light-weighting articles of nether and under wear. But his expression of disappointment was overheard. “Is it a coat he wants?” exclaimed the Hon. S. B. R., stepping forward and pulling off his own (a new summer frock of the latest fashion), and

insisting on drawing it over the cotton tatters of the veteran's dirty shirt.

And so walked off a man of a *hundred years ago*, in the coat of a man of a *hundred years ahead*. Mr. Ruggles, as we all know, is the look-out at the mast-head of the Age—giving to Public Progress, in many ways, his far-seeings into the next century to mark its charts by, and know its channels and dangers—and, of all men's coats in the world, old Billy Babcock were most drolly clad in his! It was a fossil of the Past in the shell of an embryo of the Future—two centuries at least between the vibrations (*forward*) of the pulse which the coat covered at morning, and the vibrations (*backward*) of the pulse which it covered at night!

How long this remarkable old vagrant is likely to live, I should scarcely venture to guess. He "loafs," to and fro, between here and Jersey, his four or five generations of descendants (one hundred and sixty-five of them, he says, and all poor) scattered along through the mountains, and he looks still vigorous enough to outlive the half of them, and some of us. Die when he will now, however, we have his likeness—and *his hat!* Come and see how the two explain each other, my dear Morris, and believe me

Yours.

## L E T T E R X I .

Visit to a Valley Uninhabited—Johnny Kronk's Fisherman Hut—Hubbard the Boatman—Discovery of a Spring, and Naming it Font Anna—An Eagle—Pic-Nic in Dell-Monell—The Baptism by that Name—Snakes not found, etc., etc.

JULY, 1855.

WE made a pic-nic excursion yesterday, to a stream un-lived upon, a valley uninhabited—the stream a mountain torrent most romantically beautiful, and the valley one of Nature's most exquisite caprices of loveliness found nowhere else; and, in what out-of-the-way spot, remote and difficult of access, do you suppose this Tempe to exist—unfound, unappropriated, and unvisited by the daily mail? Why—

Half way between your house and mine—three miles from Idlewild and three from Undercliff—two miles from West Point and in the heart's core of the Highlands—the hem of the valley's skirt kissed by the Hudson, and the two most lofty and famous of our mountains, Storm-King and Cro'nest, sentinelled on either side, to keep guard over her beauty!

Now and then a proud woman goes unloved because none dare break the ice of her outer mystery of disdain;

and the nymph of this Highland Tempe must be one of these. Across her proud mountain brow, and upon the rich foliage drapery of her breast, falls the eye of every traveller up the Hudson. "How beautiful!" say the pleasure-passengers of every steamer to Albany, as they glide past—"how beautiful!" exclaim the business-passengers of every rail-train to the city, as they fly by. To be ever-admired, never-approached, has been the strange destiny, hitherto, of this Highland Tempe.

I should mention that there is a deserted house tumbling to ruin in the northern corner of the valley, on the river-beach—built, years ago, with some design of a quarry at the base of the mountain—and that there is an irregular resident at the southern corner, known as "old Johnny Kronk," a Dutch fisherman with a title-deed to some of the eagle-eyries over his head. And I should mention, also, that the valley was once held by a Quaker lady, the sister of my venerable neighbor, Friend S., and that this lady, Mrs. Hope Newbold (once the owner also of Idlewild), designed its Alp-walled seclusions as the residence of a certain sect of peculiarists. I may anticipate my narrative, also, by mentioning, that, while seated around our sandwiches on the grass, yesterday, in a grove near the river, the venerable pair (Mrs. Hope and her brother), on a chance visit to the valley, dropped in upon us and joined our festivities in the shade, for the noon hour.

With her noble features and plain cap and bonnet, the tall and erect old lady looked as if the nymph of the valley might have sent her, as a chaperon mamma, to keep an eye on our familiarities ; though, with her genial smile, and clear kind eye, her breaking of bread with us was welcome, as if from the spirit of the spot.

Our boatman was Hubbard, the renowned ferryman between Cornwall and Cold Spring and the indispensable guide to the Highlands and their histories and mysteries. The friends who were to join us came down in the Alida from Newburgh, on her morning trip, and we and our baskets were soon gliding along under the rocky shore, Hubbard telling us something we wanted to know at every dip of his oar, and facts, fun and the fairies, struggling for the embarrassed attention of the eight gentlemen and ladies. Downing's friend, Counsellor Monell, and his wife ; a young lady of very remarkable beauty, from the city ; Headley, the author, Addison Richards, the artist (our guest just now) ; my wife and my daughter Imogen, with my own hundred and odd pounds avoirdupois ("troy weight" for the ladies only, of course) were the freight of the long shallop for the day.

Clinging close to the shore, we came upon a little surprise, in the first half mile—a spring I had never chanced to see, bursting from the side of the cliff and filling a curiously formed rock-basin before it falls into the river. This

basin, (size of a mirror in a lady's dressing-room) with the cold clear water forever running over its edge, is like a cup held out to you, its rim being just about at lip level as you sit in your boat. A more wondrous bettering of nature's ordinary works I never saw—in that quality of beauty so like the lovely marvel who was with us that we agreed to call the fountain by her name—**FONT-ANNA**, the sweet word to be heard hereafter, as men ferry past and catch the murmur of its music.

Hubbard pointed out a fine eagle, swooping around the shoulder of the Storm-King, as we glided slowly through the water at the monarch's feet, and he says there are many nests of them on the precipitous cliffs of this tallest mountain, constant to their homes, winter and summer. He caught an eaglet, last year, which ventured out of its eyrie-cradle (as young America is apt to do) a little too early, and it was an ugly customer as it grew up in captivity. Hubbard, as you know, has been the pilot on the river amid trying scenes, and he knows the look of what is brave as well as what is terrible; but he spoke of this adolescent cloud-loafer with evident respect for what he was born to be “up to.”

We landed on the meadow-edge of the valley, and hung our baskets in the trees, to be returned to with such appetites as we might find in our rambles. Certain glass resemblances to notes of admiration, with elastic stoppers

not to be named in general society at present, were committed to the cool keeping of a spring which Hubbard knew of. The ravine which led away from the meadow to the fork between the two mountain-tops, opened before us, heavily cushioned with foliage—every swelling mound looking rich and soft in its “velvet of three pile” and down upon the soft southern wind came the music of the brook out of sight, a thread which we could follow and trust to bring us back through the labyrinth.

Nothing comes down-stairs with the beauty of water. There is a staircase of rocks, long and winding, from the summit level to the Hudson, through this vale of Tempe; and from step to step, leap the released mountain springs, like a king’s daughters let out to play, and scattering pearls and diamonds as they dance down with music and laughter to the gardens below. You stop at every stair, as you go up, to see a princess’s foot alight upon it, with bent instep and slipper of crystal. Each one seems a picture to stay and be left alone with. There are spots at every turn of this romantic brook—dim-lighted, spray-curtained, pearl-floored and roofed with emeralds—where the vague life-dream (you wildly feel) might show itself fitly, if ever—spots to remember with the Ideal—the longed for and dream-weary Ideal—met there amid enchantments of music, and seen once and once only.

There are said to be snakes here. The ladies each

walked with a stick borrowed from Johnny Kronk's wood-pile down below. But we saw nothing to kill or run away from. It was a forenoon of surprises of beauty—a long climb and loiter, from lovely wonder to lovely wonder—each differing from the last. At one green dell, rimmed round and overhung with shade and carpeted with soft grass—a parlor with a water-fall at its window and lakelet of crystal like a nymph's bath trembling in the sun-flecks below—we gathered for a halt. It was perhaps the point of the whole scenery of the brook most likely to be remembered. The ladies, with their flowing dresses, made lovely pictures on the grass; and, while we lounged and chatted to the music of the brook, our artist friend was busy with his pencil. We were grouped around the charming queen of our party, and it was proposed to name the dell in her honor. What should the word be? The brook was listened to, and it seemed to murmur articulately, like a silver bell—DELL-MONELL. And Richards wrote it under his vignette sketch, to be engraved and remembered—Dell-Monell. You will find it by the echo, when you go there. “Dell-Monell” it kept saying as we came away, and will keep saying, I am sure, longer than we shall have summers to go back and listen.

We found a cool grove near the boat and our baskets, where we reclined upon the ground, radiating from our centre of sandwiches, to while away the less lovely noon

with its shadows of Bloomer shortness—this part of our day, perhaps, more merry than poetical. As the shadows trailed on the ground again, we started for Cro'nest, a pull along the base of which, with a look into its coves and grottoes, formed the half of our day's errand. Of this I shall not write to you, now. I wish to go there again, and find the “wild witch-hazel tree” and “chick-weed bower” of the Culprit Fay—the “elfin-court” of the “monarch,” and “the palace of the Sylphid queen.” They are all there. That exquisite dream—America’s one fairy poem—has a mountain to itself. It must be told of alone. We must have a long loiter and search there, and dip our oar homeward around its base in the light of a full moon. I will stop, for now, with the VALE OF TEMPE.

Yours.

## L E T T E R X I I .

Rights of Boys—Natural Freedom of Chestnut-trees—A Chestnut-Saturday—Curious party of Strangers visiting Idlewild—Tying Horses to Trees in Private Grounds—Low Standard of general Politeness.

OCTOBER, 1855.

I am a little unhappy to-day, and upon a point which, in its general bearings, is of sufficient interest to the Rural Public, to excuse the putting my sorrows into print. It involves the delicate question of “Love thy neighbor as thyself”—the human relation, that is to say, which one holds to the boys of the neighborhood independent of law, as brought home to my particular feeling just now in the matter of *chestnuts*. The burs are just breaking, you know, and the urchins, with tails and without—the boys and the better-behaved squirrels—are at their liveliest time of year. Pardon me if I take a fresh paragraph and go into particulars on the subject.

I became tenant of this wooded glen, I am free to admit, with a full understanding that it was a sort of *nut-municipality*—an indifferently fenced wilderness, equi-distant from the villages of Cornwall, Moodna and Canterbury, and free to all three for courtships and flower-hunt-

ing, the year round, but particularly for chestnuts and butternuts in October. The republic included squirrels; and the earliest opportunities were seized to give these little never-sad quadrupeds, and their fellow-citizens, the lovers and children, to understand, that the new fences were for no abridgment of their liberties. As a previous letter of mine has been approved for stating—I was rather obliged to them, on the contrary (the biped portion), for adding God's sixth day charm to my little Eden, and, by walking and looking happy here and there, completing what were else, for either poet or painter, a tame Paradise.

But I have been refining upon our mere wilderness, this summer. Borrowing an idea from my friend Sargent, over the river, I have been trimming the trees into frames for the scenery-pictures around. Half a dozen landscapes, visible in different directions from turns in the walks and roads, have been set in leafy circles or pointed arches, by carefully lopping the limbs of trees between which they were seen. The chestnuts, more particularly, with their far-spread limbs, had been made into massive frames for the distant mountains; and under one of the largest of them, (and here comes my grievance), I had the bold promontory which forms the lordly estate of my neighbor Verplank, inclosed like a Salvator Rosa of great price. Now what do you think? A *chestnut-Saturday* comes round, during my absence from home, and on my return, I find the

walks and roads littered with leaves, burs and broken sticks, my picture-frames all more or less battered out of shape with the long poles, but the sweeping branch that so magnificently arched over my Verplank landscape chopped short off! The gem of the gallery destroyed to get at a handful of chestnuts!

But, before moralizing on this, let me mention a more grown-up grievance which involves the same question—an accident of a week or two ago. Our grounds, as I have already mentioned to you, are graced and enlivened by a large frequentation of strangers in the summer months. They come from all directions—many carriage-loads a day—and stroll about through the tangled recesses of wood and stream, embellishing greatly the groves and meadows, along which we get glimpses of their gay dresses as they come and go, but brightening my summer's day, besides, with the sight of happiness in which my open gate has given me a share. We were driving out on the afternoon I refer to, just as a gay private equipage with a party of four, drove in. We exchanged bows with the strangers, as usual, and as my nephew Harry, one of the handsomest and most courteous little fellows in the world, held open the gate for them to pass, they complimented me by inquiring if he was my son and saying some civil things to him for his politeness. They were well dressed and fashionable-looking ladies and gentlemen—and, see what

they could do! They tied their horses to a beautiful cedar tree on the lawn, directly in front of our drawing-room windows, and left them there while they took an hour's stroll through the glen, the horses (just in the worst of fly-time) pawing and kicking up a square yard of the smooth velvet grass, and *gnawing off half the bark* of this invaluable cedar. There were the stable and sheds within a few feet, and a long tie-post which they had passed directly by, placed on purpose so that no one could miss it. The tree which they have probably destroyed (it stands swathed and poulticed with sad disfigurement of our lawn, at present), took at least twenty years to grow, and the site of our house was chosen with reference to this and three or four other superb evergreens which, if similarly made tie-posts of, could not be replaced in a life-time.

Now, these visitors meant no harm—though I do not believe they would have tied their horses just there, if they had not known us to be off the premises. It was merely a hurried thoughtlessness of other people's rights, and a want of the habitual politeness which keeps people gentlemen when not likely to be observed. I should mention that the party rung at the door and requested to be shown over the house, mentioning that they had just passed me at the gate. The female servant thus being led to suppose they were our friends, and feeling delicate about requesting them to find another place for their horses.

The fact is, the *standard of general politeness and regard for the thoroughfare and wayside rights of non acquaintances*, is humiliatingly low, in our country. We are a rude and impolite people in little things, though as chivalric and disinterested as any nation on earth when there is any particular call for it. Our primer and catechism of civilities want looking to—the better education of children and the working-classes in these trifling points of national manners.

And this brings me to the question, the asking of which was the main purpose of my letter. Is it not possible—would it not be patriotic to think seriously of it as a republicanism—to so far correct the evil, as to avoid the otherwise inevitable alternative? *Must our American public be excluded from the parks, grounds, gardens, and cultivated rural retreats of private persons, and excluded simply because they do not behave civilly when admitted?* Ours should be, above all other lands, the one where there is the freest sharing of what is innocent, natural and beautiful. And, so little a difference of education and general attention to the matter would make it so! The material is in us—the kindness and generosity in the natural ore, which only needs coining into pennyworths.

But, for myself, I am still going to believe in mankind and strangers—or, rather, I am not going to exclude the ninety-nine kindly and gentle for the incivility and brutality

of the hundredth. It will be long before I shall be willing to see the smile of nature in a beautiful tree disfigured by "Beware of dogs and spring-guns" in a signboard on the trunk. So, for the present, come boys for the chestnuts! and come strangers for the walks and the water-falls! Only, (once more) climb carefully for what will come down with shaking, and please not to tie your horses to my trees!

And with this little sermon I will close my letter.

Yours,

## LETTER XIII.

My Crumb-family of Winter-birds—The Kingfisher and Blue Jay—the Red Squirrel—A Quadruped Chicken—A Chicken half Duck—A Stuffed Bantam Hen—Interview between Stuffed Hen and Living Bantam Cock, Jake, etc.

MAY, 1856.

WITH the usual seasonable rejoicing over spring, I am mourning over the break-up of a new class of society into which I had found winter admittance. I will describe it, for I believe its history contains a lesson as to what ought to be done, at least whenever the winter is severe.

In obedience to a newspaper paragraph (which had given me a hint as to the probable famine among the birds, with the unusual continuance of the snow), I sprinkled crumbs, after two or three successive snow-storms, upon the roof of a piazza under my study window. The first day the little bits of crust were unnoticed, and buried with the fresh fallen flakes. On the second day, the discovery of the “spread” was made, apparently, by a single snow-bird—a little fellow with grey coat and white breast who communicated it to a very numerous family. Almost immediately after the coming of the second bird, a flock of from ten to twenty took up their perch on the hemlock

and cedar trees upon the neighboring lawn ; and these kept watch while two or three at a time descended and pecked lustily at the luxuries scattered on their snow-white table. Not to be seen myself, at my broad window which was on a level with the roof, I pinned up a muslin curtain —opaque, of course, from the outside—and through this I could watch them very closely and without giving alarm.

I had entertained these little grey and white guests for a week or two, when I discovered two additions to our society, a high-crested king-fisher almost as large as a pigeon, and a very superb blue jay. These more coy customers, however, would not eat like the smaller birds on the premises. They pounced upon what they wanted and flew with it to some tree in the adjoining wood, to feast in more privacy and security. I wondered at these two *lordly* birds coming so constantly unaccompanied by their mates, till I found, by reference to natural history, that the males precede the females a week or two, in migration—a law of nature which contains a chivalry toward the weaker sex.

And, last not least, my “ daily bread ” was discovered by a red squirrel, between whom and the birds there took place regularly, not a fight, but a very active competition of scramble. By increasing the dispensation, however, and watching to make a fresh spread after the squirrel had cleared the field, I succeeded in maintaining the apparent plenty.

For two months or more, I had this lively society around me as I sat at my daily work; and it can hardly be conceived, without trial of the experiment, how interested one becomes in such a little family of dependents. Birds are very beautiful creatures. My two aristocrats, particularly—the king-fisher with his crown and the blue jay with his brilliant plumage—were supremely handsome. And to know that one had found the way to these wild memories and attachments, and, by those few crumbs, to minister like a daily Providence to such a troop of bright innocents, was very softening to the heart. I felt as if I had established a new relationship of existence. To my children, who came daily to watch them through the muslin curtain, it was, probably, evidence, of course that “Papa” had the same mysterious control over the little live feathers as over the grown-up quills in the inkstand—but it was new quill-driving to me. And (to be considered ?) as we lessen our intercourse with the more busy world of mankind, might not the cultivating of these simpler and less exacting relationships, with what is around us, prevent the feeling of isolation and disseverance so often complained of in retirement?

But with April disappeared the snow; and with it my early birds and squirrel. Day after day I have tried in vain to tempt them back with an array of fresh crumbs. In the colder North (strangely enough !) the little twitterers find more attraction than in our springing grass and

flowers and budding trees ; but I do not despair of winning gradually upon the notice of the later birds, who are now multiplying in our woods in great variety. The wildly wooded precipices of the glen immediately under my window offer charming accommodations for the new acquaintance I am ambitious of cultivating.

I should not do justice to all the birds of our neighborhood, however, without mentioning, that, on an adjoining farm, was born, last week, a *quadruped chicken*! Whether such caprices of nature occur very often, unchronicled, I know not—but my neighbor thinks his four-legged fowl quite a miracle. The nearest approach we have made to it, in our own henry, was a *chicken half duck* (we called it the “Culprit Fay by Drake”) which waddled about in a newly-hatched brood at Idlewild for a week or two ; and, of its paternal resemblance, the poor thing was evidently very much ashamed. It made for a bush and hid its webbed feet and horizontal tail whenever it was looked at—a genealogical sensibility which was curious, at least, in one of that family.

While speaking of fowls, by the way, I may as well record, for our friends the spiritualists, some evidence that has turned up at Idlewild within a few days, on the subject of *posthumous recognition*. It may be rememberd, that, in a letter of two or three months since, I mentioned a demonstration of remarkable attachment and constancy between

a bantam cock and his hen Polly. Polly died, as I pathetically narrated the particulars. But, from the almost human interest which she had excited among the children, it was thought best to confer upon her the nearest approach we could make to human immortality—sending her to the city, that is to say, to be stuffed for what Future there might be in salts and spices.

Polly's purgatory was unexpectedly long (so long, in fact, that we had almost forgotten all about her) but, a day or two since, she reappeared—purified and no more to die, looking as natural as life, though in the blessed ornithology of a glass case. She was set upon the dinner-table (though stuffed, not to be eaten but admired); but presently there was an acclamation among the children, a “table-moving” of the liveliest kind, to introduce this apparition to Jake. What would he say to her? Would he recognize her? In three months had he forgotten her?

The glass cover was removed, and Polly was taken out upon the lawn, where (with the square block to which her feet were nailed, hidden in the grass, she stood erect and apparently in full feather of life and beauty. They went to the stable for the widower—but, meantime, I had my doubts, I confess. The experiment involved curious questions:—is there natural magnetism after death?—can there be sympathy without reciprocity of bowels?—what is the length of fowl memory?—how about affectionateness

post mortem?—is recognition instinctive without mention or exchange of looks? etc., etc. It was to be Nature's bare and blunt decision on these tender points; and, for me, there could scarcely have been contrived a five-minutes' more anxious anticipation.

In the habit of being taken into the hand to be fed, Jake was easily enough caught and brought up for the interview; and, with the household standing round in expectant wonder, he was set down suddenly in the disembowelled presence of his Polly.

He stood a moment—expecting, evidently, the usual Polly-syllable of welcome—but, no cluck, no stir! The doubt, or delay, was only for a moment, however. The semi-circular repetitions of trot and the extension of the wings to the ground, the first signs of bantam affectionateness, were most busily gone into; and then followed the most voluble utterance of rooster sentiments, peckings with the bill, crowings and caressings—Polly being several times knocked over, but her irresponsive prostrations and the evident setting of her up again, by the children, producing, on the believing Jake, no beginning of incredulity or mistrust. In dread, at last, of damage to the personal appearance of the over-caressed Polly, we removed her once more from his mortal sight and sent him back, with refreshed memory, to the stable—a widower once more.

And, with these precious facts for deduction and theory,

perhaps our clairvoyant friends will be assisted to a revelation.

— Our daily boat between Newburgh and New York has begun to pass under my windows morning and evening, and it quite seems to connect us with the world again—though, with my invalid seclusion of nearly eight months, (so long, I believe, since I have been in the city) New York had grown to seem very far off. The unusually early and busy stir of strangers, looking up lodgings for the summer in our Highland neighborhood, gives proof of the apprehension as to the city's healthiness for the coming season and our green hills certainly look most wholesomely tempting and beautiful at present.

\* \* \* \* \*

## L E T T E R   X I V.

Late Freshet—Pond washed out and Boat gone—Death of two favorite Dogs—  
Charming Habits of the lost ones—Jake's other Name—His History etc., etc.

SEPTEMBER, 1856.

OF the damage by the late freshet, "five hundred thousand dollars on Hudson River Valley alone," as reported in the newspapers, Idlewild has had its share—of the three foot bridges in the ravine, (logs felled across and worth, at least, each one dollar and fifty cents), neither chip nor splinter remaining since the torrent of Thursday. The boat also, on the Loiter-water (a sort of broad-stair pond between the upper and lower staircases of rapids), was swept over the cliffs and dashed to pieces; and this we reckon at five still more melancholy dollars—the navigation of the Loiter-water (that dark and deep-down lake, in the depths of the glen never visited by the sun), being the untiring hot-weather amusement of all the school-boys in the neighborhood. And it would be an obituary injustice to the memory of that same flat-bottomed boat, if we were not to mention, that it was built and painted on the premises—a piece of rainy-day work by which our faithful omni-up-to-things, Sam Bell, after showing his knack at

everything that was ever done by most folks, proved also that he could have got off the island if he had been Robinson Crusoe.

The last week, freshet and all, has been crowded with calamities for us. Two dogs, who, by the gradual promotion of affection and intimacy, had arrived at the undisputed grade and valuation of human beings—our bull-terrier QUINTY (Quintessence of Ugliness), and the handsomest of possible spaniels, JAKE (Jacob Faithful, *alias* Numa Pompilius)—are suddenly seen at Idlewild no more. Quinty died, alas, too, for so little! We should have been so glad to have furnished horse and wagon for the watermelons and cucumbers in the way of whose travels by night the poor poisoned dog was some night-walker's obstacle! And Jake! What are the half-dozen turkeys (in defence of whom he died fighting the dogs of our neighbor the butcher), to his value even as a picture on the parlor floor! For such trifles of inadequacy and needlessness, are fought some of life's desperate battles, after all!

My very walking-stick seems widowed, since the death of Jake and Quinty. They both knew the difference between my taking of that from its corner, and all other preparations for going out. Forbidden to follow me on horseback, they lay motionless as I passed out of the door with the riding-whip in hand. With hat and gloves only, they knew it was the equally forbidden drive.

But, for the daily ramble through the glen, the stick was the blessed and unmistakable announcement; and if ever joy was at its utmost of expressive demonstration, it was in the start by these two dogs for that hour or more of constitutional stroll and scramble. The hunting of squirrels, the leaping of cascades, the swimming of pools, the chasing of each other through the wood, and (on Jake's part), the diving for eels in still-water, really made up, for them, a happiness it was contagious to witness—a happiness I found myself many a time buoyantly afloat upon, when I should otherwise have been aground in my dullness and depression, and by which (I feel thick in my throat now to remember) I am to be made happy no more. It would be profane to mark a cross on the rock at the foot of which these two beloved dogs lie buried—but there are thousands for whom the Saviour perhaps died, at whose graves there will be no mourning such as the whole household of Idlewild feels now for Jake and Quinty—thousands who would thank God if even the holy crosses on their gravestones were to be wet with such tears as our children shed over these poor brute-playmates. It is hard to believe that two races so spliced together, as the canine and human, do not lap over—hard to feel that some dogs are not better worth saving than some men, some men more fit to rot in unhallowed ground and be forever forgotten than some dogs. Creatures so intelligent, and yet

so patient of our neglect—so sensitive and yet so forgiving of our roughness and our ingratitude ! So gentle when we do not seem to love them, so overjoyed when we do ! So uncomplaining, even of hunger, if we are not ready to feed them—even of storm and cold, when turned out from the bright fire on the winter's night, to watch for us while we sleep warm in our beds ! So ready to fight and die, for us and our poorest belongings ! Surely, for qualities like these, though they go upon four legs—qualities that would grace a Christian or a hero—there should be some outer vestibule in religion. We might even let a child pray, it seems to me, that, through the open door of heaven for the humble, where he is taught that the beggar that takes alms from his hand may sit above him, his faithful dog may be permitted to look in.

Without any manner of belief in the theory that dog-life is the purgatory of departed souls (previously known sinners, still among us, that is to say, with no power beyond the wagging of inarticulate tails to tell us who they are), I must confess to a superstitious feeling as to Jake—shared by the whole family, indeed, on the night before his death. He behaved very unaccountably, that night ! A lady had been passing a week or two with us, by whose voluntaries upon the piano Gottschalk himself has been often wonderfully inspired ; and she was seated at the instrument, holding us in a breathless spell as usual, with all windows open

to the summer twilight. Ugliness is apt to be more demonstrative than beauty, and Quinty had his habit of walking around when the music made him affectionate, and putting his ugly mug into everybody's lap; but Jake, with his raven silkiness of proportions spread into a picture on the grey ground of the gravel walk, enjoyed the music also, apparently, though with no expressions of his sympathy beyond lingering where he could listen in silence. Our friend came to the air of a low, melancholy vesper-chant, which she had heard from the boatmen, while rowing out in the moonlight at Amalfi—an air we were all exceedingly fond of, and which found its way usually unsummoned, floating dreamily forth upon the full flow of melody from her unguided fingers. With the first few notes of it upon the lightly-touched keys, Jake entered by the low window into the drawing-room, walked across with a thoughtful grace and deliberateness which drew all eyes upon him, placed his fore-paws upon my knees, and, with his great brown eyes on a level with mine, gave a shrill sharp cry. He then went to the side of the piano, crouched with his breast upon his fore-feet, and fixed his steady gaze upon the face of the player till she concluded. With the close of the music he began the round of the family, and in a subdued and wholly unfrolicksome way, sought the caresses of those to whom he had hitherto seemed insensible. It was a marvel to all of us what a

sad and uncharacteristic tenderness had suddenly come over him. We talked of it, the last thing before separating, that night, and, in the morning, he was found dead at the gate. A vile dog was dead beside him, one of a pack of night-marauding hounds who are the pest of the neighborhood, and by whom the brave and beautiful creature had been literally torn in pieces. Is it strange that we should remember, even superstitiously, so tender and timely a leave-taking, seeing in it, soulless animal though he was, a spirit-presentiment of his death!

We love those most who flatter us by a preference—there is no denying; and, with all possible appreciation of the perhaps superior intelligence of ugly Quinty, his equally unconquerable spunk and good humor, and his thoughtful singling out of my only son for his friend and master, I must confess to a weakness of partiality for the less gifted Numa. With no accomplishments except for his own pleasure—no rat-catcher, no cow-driver, no pig-chaser—he loved *me*! From his first day at Idlewild, the choice was evident and the constancy unwavering afterwards. It is due to his dear memory that I should record one proof of it—the quadruped poetry of this eventless period of my life—his attempt at an impossibility, to overtake and accompany me. When I started for an excursion in the steam-skiff, the other day, he followed me at a distance, and, though repeatedly driven back, stood on the

wharf as the swift little boat left the shore. In a new and strange-looking craft, gaudily painted, and, with foaming wheels, we were going from him at ten miles an hour—already a hundred yards of troubled water between us—when, with a longing howl, he sprung into the river, and started to overtake us! The captain of the little "Alida," delighted with the brave devotion of the handsome dog, put back his wheels, unrequested, and himself dragged him into the boat. But it was proof piled preciously on proof. To follow me to the river side, spite of all orders to the contrary, was love against obstacles. But, to attempt to overtake me in a steamboat, and with only his own courage for a propeller, water-dog though he was, amounted to love against impossibilities. The romance endeared Jake to me —outweighing the disobedience.

It just occurs to me, that I may have lessened the respect due to the memory of Jake, by mentioning him with an "*alias*" to his name. Single-minded as the honest creature was, the being called after both Jacob Faithful and the Roman Emperor may require some posthumous explanation. A model of fidelity, he was fairly enough (by his first lady mistress who gave him to the mistress of Idlewild), called after the faithful Jacob of the story; but I am fastidious about names; and as he was exceedingly handsome, it occurred to me that, with his new home, he might with propriety receive some new

name—one, at least, that should be more complimentarily descriptive. His previous home was a singularly beautiful spot, a country-seat, the special feature of whose grounds—a fountain wonderfully hidden in a deep-down dell—gives it the obviously fitting designation of Font Egeria; and, with the Fountain of Egeria in the Roman story, Numa Pompilius is the name, of course, always remembered. I was somewhat hesitating upon this (as it runs not very trippingly on the tongue), when I overheard one of the children talking to the strange dog of the *new 'ma* he was now to be obedient to; and this double fitness of the word—complimentary both to his previous and present mistress—struck me at once as overruling. Numa was pronounced to be his name; though, to the word “Jake” (to his dying day we were forced to confess) he wagged the splendid fringes of his tail with much the more approving recognition—of the tender and sweet voice of his first kind mistress, retaining, thus, to the last, a grateful remembrance.

To return to the “five hundred thousand dollar freshet,” however.

We keep forgetting, from year to year, how powerful and desolating are these occasional floods, and I had been all summer at work, bridging the chasms of our wild ravine and making walks along the crags—many a beautiful point of view thus gained which has been heretofore inaccessible, and all now swept clean and impassable again,

with this devastating torrent. But we shall begin anew probably, when the waters get gentle-voiced, and soothe us into believing them once more ; and such is the story of our trust in what may be dew, or it may be freshet—

“To love again and be again undone !”

though Bell says that we might hitch these objects of our affection (the planks at the crossing places, that is to say) with a rope stout enough to resist the momentary surprises of temptation. And, where there are principles still within reach (trees not yet up-rooted by the torrent, that is to say), it will be certainly worth while to try the strength of any such possibility of a make-fast. We are sorry, only, for one unforeseen trouble. The storm, on which came these rains, was doubtless the “September gale,” though in August, and we are to have no more low waters—consequently no getting of our usual quantity of fine gravel for the roads from the beds of the brook, and no dry footing to repair walks and build dams. We are to wait till next year for conveniences thus dependent on the omitted drought.



## L E T T E R   X V .

Letter to Morris about a previous Letter torn-up—Temptingness of the topic—Pleasure of writing confidentially—Tired look at the Letter—Discontent with it—Tearing up—Reason why, and reconsideration—Irving's Abbotsford—Fragments of torn Letter re-gathered—Trip to Irvington—Breakfast with an old Friend in a same old place—Railway ride to Irvington—Wolfert's-dell—Mr. Grinnell's yacht, the "Haze"—Sunnyside and Mr. Irving, etc., etc.

JULY 29, 1857

I HAVE been trying to put into shape again, the pieces of a torn-up letter which I wrote to you last week; and, spite of a lost corner (swept irrecoverably from under my table, I believe, with yesterday's broom), I think I can copy or re-write, what seems to me, with this after-reading, too precious to be lost. It was written "at a heat"—a description of the day before, passed with Washington Irving at Sunnyside, and of a drive with him in the afternoon through "Sleepy Hollow"—and I destroyed it:—but I must be at some little pains to tell you why, and with what encouragement I now venture to reproduce it.

To us, who are in the habit, each day, of jotting down for our own private public, some one or other of those

more common incidents "written," otherwise, "only in the sand," it is an event—not only "to be chronicled in red letters," but with eager zest and excitement—the one told of in these re-gathered fragments. So seldom are the two things thus united—what we have the most pleasure in ourselves, and what every reader of our Journal would be most pleased to hear us tell of! Mr. Irving—by far the most honored man in our country—is, curiously enough, even less honored than loved. He is a marvel, if only by that difference from other men of genius—whose destiny it seems to be to have their last days sad. The setting of his sun is mellow, the clouds behind and around him rosier as he goes. There is another summer-day beauty, too, in his decline; the full moon of renown after death, seen clearly, even before the setting of his sun. His fame, to be recognized, will undergo no change, and there will be no intervening darkness before its rising—now in its place, full and cloudless, waiting only till the glow of his living presence shall fade away, to show, with the same disk, more lustre. You see how tempting the theme—a day of sweetest summer, in company with such a man, and on ground he has himself made classic!

I wrote of it—a long happy morning of shirt-sleeves and glowing spontaneity—passing the day over again in the fresh memories crowding thick around my inkstand. With tranquil self-approval, the lull of brain and pulse

after successful industry, I took a walk (with a horse under me) in the musing twilight. But, alas for the happiest day's pre-pillow-y disenchantments! Alas for the fancy less, cold eye, with which, before getting into bed, a tired writer takes sometimes a last look at his morning inspirations! Failing, in the first blow-out to my candle, I was stooping for a renewal of the effort, when I caught sight of the manuscript on the table. Stay! thought I, let me read again of my day with Irving and thus be sure of some sweet stuff for dreams! And, to the worn old working-chair we slid—mistaken night-shirt and I—and, in three astonished minutes, the blotted leaves were in pieces on the floor, the candle blown out with an emphasis, and my head on the pillow of discontent!

You will have anticipated my fault findings with that letter. It was written too confidingly to *you*—as if on the same axis revolved Morris and “the world”—*you* with your overflowing heart and the world with its volcano of misconception—and both “craters” are not equally to be trusted! I had seen Irving that day, too, with a certain privilege—in the unguardedness of a holiday among relatives—and, more delightful as of course this was to me, and more valuable as it makes the description for the reader, I am, in a manner, more restricted by its confidingness. It is a question somewhat mooted, just now, you now, how far may be thus used, if at all, the privileges of

hearth, friendship, and relationship. But, with these fountains of better knowledge put under seal, what becomes of biography? How is a loving world to be content with its idolized great men, seen only in their books, in full dress, or when sitting for their pictures? And it was in spite of this last argument, you see, that I tore up my careless letter about IRVING!

But I have since read "Abbotsford," over again—Irving's answer to the same question, for himself. He took a letter of introduction to Scott, and passed days with him in the intimacy of cordial hospitality; and he has given us, in that most fascinating sketch of the "Mighty Minstrel"—of his home in the North, his manners and his familiar conversation—the most precious of all the pictures of Sir Walter. He used his privilege of guest to share with the world his nearer view of such a man; and posterity without it, would be poorer by a much-prized memorial. Who has not laid away in his heart, like a sweet-scented flower, Irving's portraiture of Scott at Abbotsford?

And this gives me encouragement to wafer together again my pieces of a letter. I publish it by his own great example—for, though the writers are by no means of the same skill and estimation, the subjects are about equal in fame and interest. Irving at Sunnyside will be a sweet dream to posterity, as Scott at Abbotsford—two great

hearts (in fact, I think) set as nearly to the same tune by Nature, as their two monuments mark the same height for their genius. Thank God the monument for Irving is a cenotaph—built but unoccupied as yet.

Leaving out the first page of introduction, then, thus run my re-tessellated fragments :

\* \* \* \* \*

“Wolfert’s Dell,” you know, the residence of Moses Grinnell, who, with his nephew, married nieces of Mr. Irving, adjoins Sunnyside; in fact, but for the invisible lines of legal demarcation it is the same place—there being no fences between, and the gravel-path, from door to door, being like a well-contrived shade-tangle in a partly wooded lawn. The Joseph Grinnells, (on their way home to New Bedford after passing a week with us), were to dine at their brother’s, meeting Mr. Irving; and, business taking me to town the day before, I arranged to join them there—the “up” and “down” morning trains very nearly crossing at Irvington. How magically these *ex-horse*-isms of steam and iron cast out the “devil of a distance,” making it “only a step” from the two ends of sixty miles to the middle !

I went down to breakfast, at the same old “seven o’clock,” at the Astor, and found my old friend Lyman in the same old chair, at the same old end of the table; and I joined him round the same old corner, and took a bit

of) it seemed to me! the same old tender steak and fried potatoes—twelve years and its steaks and potatoes vanishing from our two old memories, apparently, like yesterday's spots from the table-cloth—and, at eight, (praying God that I might be left alone with my small allowance of lungs, by any fellow-passenger who might wish me to scream to him about "Fernando Wood" and the "warm weather") I took my seat in the cars for "up the river."

We were at Irvington in an hour—a panoramic hour,—the Palisades and the Tappan Sea gliding scenically past—and blessed (I say) is a long forenoon that can be thus pleasurabley preceded! To the opera of a summer's day it was an overture of beauty!

The "down party" had arrived before me, and were enjoying the river from the uncommon out-doors of Mr. Grinnell's broad prairies, (or piazzas, if you are too "Butter-Hill-y" to call things bigger than common by uncommon names;) and, off the lawn, lay the "Haze," that albatross of yachts, which we have since seen among our coarser waterfowl in Highlands Bay. Mr. Irving, (who with his present *serial* historic labors, is rather a "night-blooming-series" than a "morning glory,") was as yet invisible; and our host, taking advantage of the cooler temperature of the hour, made signal for his row-boat. We pulled off to the yacht and got a view of Sunnyside from her deck—just the point of view that an artist would have

chosen—and that picture of its coy architecture, nearly hidden in the close woods, but still temptingly suggestive by what peeped demurely though the leaves, will remain in my memory. A dip into the Admiral's daintily contrived cabin, and an introduction to his well-furnished locker and larder, completed our water-party.

Returning to the grounds, we took the gravel-walk to Mr. Irving's. The quaint problem of his house unfolded as we approached it—the gables, pinnacles and porches, with their climbing ivy, the single tower with its dormer windows, and the deep shade covering it all with an atmosphere contemplatively mellow—though it had a charm for me (and one which, with all his eager interest the chance visitor must bring away), that the structure is not wholly comprehensible. Walked in and around the house, as you most welcomely and freely are, there are still shrubbery-hid *ins* and unexplainable *outs*, covert peeps of windows and surprises of nooks and angles, leaving (what every hospitable house should be provided with, I think), the spare room for the imagination !

Under the small portico at the entrance we found seated, with their books and work, a group of Mr. Irving's household of nieces, one of whom, at present an invalid, on a visit to her former home, is the wife of my own wife's brother—the nearer link with the beloved and honored master of Sunnyside, which, as making me a larger

shareholder in what whole countries so covet for their own, is, as you remember, both pride and happiness to me. Mr. Irving himself made his appearance at the door, as we approached it. . . . .

I shall have to re-write that lost fragment of my letter, dear Morris! It helped boil the teakettle, this morning, probably—Irving's very self, as I am sure you would have said, if you had read it—and, though there is no getting back departed Irvings (as I hope it will be long before we are called upon to realize) we can at least do our best to copy them. Next week, you shall have the lost leaf, as nearly as I can remember it, with the remaining fragments of the Letter about that most pleasurable day. And, meantime,

Yours faithfully.

## L E T T E R X V I .

Continuance of Letter to Morris descriptive of a Day with Washington Irving—  
Impression of his Appearance—Visit to his Library—His Desk and Blotting-sheet—Conversation for a half hour—Literary habits—Motley's "Dutch Republic"—Feeling as to his own New Books before they were reviewed—History of the first Conception of the Sketch-Book—Pictures on the Walls—The Grounds of Sunnyside—Comparison of Climates—Tulip-trees in triplets—Squirrels and two-legged Tree-destroyers—Humorous Reason for Growth of Trees—Incident at starting on our Drive to Sleepy Hollow, etc., etc.

AUGUST 4, 1857.

WITH so attractive a theme as the one I am to resume in this letter, the shorter my preface, the better, I suppose; so (stopping only to express the content which one naturally feels when his listeners are more eager than usual) I come at once to the spot where you were left at the close of my letter of last week:—the threshold of Sunnyside.

Mr. Irving came out while we were exchanging salutations with the group under the porch—his true and easy step, pliant motion, admirable spontaneousness of good spirits and quiet simplicity of address, giving him *the presence* of a man of half his age. This impression was somewhat corroborated, no doubt, by the summer airiness of his dress and a certain juvenescence that there will always be about

light walking shoes and a low-crowned straw hat—somewhat, too, perhaps, by the unchanged erectness and compactness of his well-proportioned figure—but I did not realize (then, nor afterwards during the day) that there was anything in his mien or appearance but the healthfulness of middle age, anything but the uncomelled promptness and elasticity of vigor unabated.

It was one of those mornings when the inside of the house is “the wrong side of the door;” and, to ask us to “walk in” would scarce have been a welcome. Mr. Irving leaned against one of the pillars of the piazza, chatting with us to the tune of soft air, foliage and sunshine; till, the conversation turning upon the architecture of the house, he took me into his library to see the drawing of it, as first built. There was, of course, a spell in the atmosphere of this inner sanctuary. It was on the north side; and the clustering ivy and foliage at the windows contributed to the mellowed thoughtfulness of the light. At the spacious writing-table in the centre stood the one comfortable arm-chair, with the accustomed blotting-sheet, askew at the working angle, between it and the inkstand; and of this blotting-sheet, by the way, (nothing legible upon it except two or three little sums in arithmetic, ciphered out upon the corners), I begged the possession! It was the first time I had ever asked for an autograph, I believe; but, remembering a new volume of my daughter’s, and seeing

at once what a treasure of an addition to it this memorial would be—(the door-mat on which the thoughts of Irving's last book had wiped their sandals as they went in)—I begged that he would give it me, writing his name first upon the least-specked margin. Deprecatorily insisting, for a while, that the autograph should, at least, be upon a clean sheet of paper, he finally complied; giving me, meantime, unsuspectingly, a priceless picture to store away in my memory—*himself seated writing at his table*. With his head a little on one side (as is his wont, and as all portraits represent him), the genial smile on his lips “holding still” for a moment, and a covert look of humor in his eye, it was wonderful how much, for that single unconscious minute, he looked *as the Sketch-Book reads*—how truthful the representation was, of the Geoffrey Crayon it conjures up to our imaginations.

The drawing of the original house hung on the wall; and it represents a very simple, practical, and every-day dwelling—poetical and even romantically beautiful as looks Sunnyside now. It was commenced as Irving commences his most airy fancies—with a foundation of common sense, that will be worth preserving when the gayer ornament shall have lost its novelty. And on the more perishable exterior, by the way, the frost of the last winter made a beginning, killing a large portion of the luxuriant ivy (the original stock of which was brought from Melrose Abbey)

covering the wall and turrets on the east side. The additions to the house—its wings, tower, balconied windows and projections—have been the gradual pleasure-toil of Mr. Irving; in this view, being one of his “works”—built very much as the Sketch-Book was written—and (more than most authors’ residences) to be therefore pictured and remembered.

Our conversation for the half hour that we sat in that little library, turned, first, upon the habits of literary labor. Mr. Irving, in reply to my inquiry (whether like Rip Van Winkle, he had “arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity”), said “no”—that he had sometimes worked even fourteen hours a day, but that he usually sits in his study, occupied, from breakfast till dinner (both of us agreeing, that, in literary vegetation the “do” is on in the morning); and, that he should be sorry to have much more leisure. He thought, indeed, that he should “die in harness.” He never had a headache—that is, his workshop never gave him any trouble—but, among the changes which time has wrought, one, he says, is very decided; the desire of travel is dead within him. The days are past when he could sleep or eat anywhere with equal pleasure; and he goes to town as seldom as possible.

Motley’s “Dutch Republic” lay open on the table, and Irving said he had been employing a little vacation from his own labors in the reading of it. It had interested him

exceedingly. “How surprising” (he exclaimed, quite energetically) “that so young a man should jump at once, full-grown to fame, with a big book, so well-studied and complete!” This turned the conversation upon the experiences of authorship, and he said that he was always afraid to open the first copy that reached him, of a new book of his own. He sat and trembled and remembered all the weak points where he had been embarrassed and perplexed, and where he felt he might have done better—hating to think of the book, indeed, until the reviewers had praised it. Indifference to praise or censure, he thought, was not reasonable or natural. At least, it was impossible to *him*. He remembered how he had suffered from the opinion of a Philadelphia critic, who, in reviewing the Sketch-Book, at its first appearance, said that “Rip Van Winkle” was a silly attempt at humor, quite unworthy of the author’s genius.

My mention of Rogers, the poet, and some other friends of Mr. Irving’s who had asked me about him in England, opened a vein of his London recollections. He was never more astonished, he said, than at the success of the Sketch-Book. His writing of those stories was so unlike an inspiration—so entirely without any feeling of confidence which could be prophetic of their popularity. Walking with his brother, one dull, foggy Sunday, over Westminster Bridge, he got to telling the old Dutch stories which he had heard at Tarrytown, in his youth—when the thought suddenly

struck him: "I have it! I'll go home and make memoranda of these for a book!" And, leaving his brother to go to church, he went back to his lodgings, and jotted down all the data; and, the next day—the dullest and darkest of London fogs—he sat in his little room and wrote out "Sleepy Hollow," by the light of a candle.

I alluded to the story I had heard told at Lady Blessington's—of Irving going to sleep at a dinner-party, and their taking him up softly and carrying him to another house, where he waked up amid a large evening party—but he shook his head incredulously. It was Disraeli's story, he said, and was told of a party at Lady Jersey's, to which he certainly went, after a dinner-party—but not with the dramatic nap at the table, nor the waking up in her ladyship's drawing room, as described. In fact, he remembered the party, as such a "jam," that he did not get, that evening, beyond the first landing of the staircase.

Among the pictures on the walls of his library, were the two admirable engravings, one representing Johnson at table with his friends, the other giving portraits of Scott's intimates, as he read his novel to them in the library at Abbotsford. "What company these are!" said Irving—"how interesting to have them!" As I walked around, I found, in a corner, a small pen-and-ink sketch—an exceedingly clever caricature of Paganini. It was done, he said, by Stuart Newton, as he sat with him one day—done in

one of that artist's dreamy, unconscious moods—and Irving had taken it from under his hand, to preserve it. There was another, of the English wit, Lord Somers, a famous "man about town," when Irving was first in London ; and another still, of a dramatist whose name does not occur to me at this moment—both impromptu pencillings on waste scraps of paper, but framed to hang up as memorials of pleasant days. And, in a dark corner, hung Leslie's portrait of Irving himself, always allowed to be the best, and well known to the world by the engravings from it.

With the horticulture and arboriculture of "Wolfert's Dell," Mr. Grinnell has been singularly successful ; and, as we were to make the rounds of the shrubberies and hot-houses, before the sun should be fairly vertical, we were now admonished that it was time—Mr. Irving at once taking his straw hat to accompany us. A remark upon the beauty of the verdure, near his door, drew from him a most poetical outburst as to the happy superiority of our climate. In Spain, he said, he had found it most depressing—the lack of verdure. In England, they have the most beautiful of fields and lawns, but it is so damp that you can never sit down, out of doors, without taking cold. In our country alone, is the grass green enough, the sun bright enough, and the sward dry enough. While we were still in the immediate grounds of Sunnyside, I observed two remarkable triplets of the tulip-tree—superb

growths of three equal shafts, tall and of arrowy straightness, from each root—and in these fine specimens of the cleanest-leaved and healthiest-looking of trees, he said he took great pleasure. A squirrel ran up one of them as we approached, and, upon this race of depredators, he had been obliged to make war, this summer. They were a little bit more destructive than their beauty was an excuse for. With another class of destructives, however, he did not know so well how to contend—the visitors who drive into his grounds and tie their horses to his trees.

The well-shaded ravine which has Sunnyside sitting on one of its knees—(once called “Wolfert’s Roost,” and long used by that famous Dutchman as the covert-way between the river and his haunts)—is conveniently and gracefully intersected with paths; but I remarked to Mr. Irving that they were somewhat of the outline character of ours at Idlewild. Yes, he said, on *his* side of the dell, they were merely dug out and *walked hard*; but, as they communicated with those of his rich neighbor, he was very often lucky enough to get the credit of the smooth gravel-walks, too! And he presently gave another of his crayonesque touches to his neighbor, assuring us, very solemnly, while we were wondering at the growth to which the transplanted trees had attained in so short a time, that “it was done by Mr. Grinnell’s going round at night, himself, with a lantern and water-pot, to see that the trees did not oversleep them-

selves"—a fact (seen through Irving's spectacles), as Mr Grinnell, engrossed all day with his business in the city, and only at home at night, sometimes takes a look at the gardener's work, by the aid of a lantern.

At the door of the hot-house, Mr. Irving said it was warm enough for *him*, outside. He preferred to stand under a tree and wait for us—particularly as he had seen the grapes before and hoped to see some of them again. Astonished as my own wilderness-trained eyes were, of course, with the wonderful fecundity of those glass-covered vines, I was more interested in the visit to Mr. Grinnell's sumptuous stables; and here Mr. Irving kept us close company. He loves horses. And, as the groom led out one of the favorite "bloods," for us to look at, he gave us a thrilling account of his being run away with, a year or two ago—not by Van Tassel's horse, "Gunpowder," of whose viciousness he has himself been the chronicler, though it was upon the very same ground and with the very same result. He and "Ichabod Crane" were both thrown, at the entrance to Sleepy Hollow.

As we strolled slowly through the grounds, we came to two dwarf statues—grotesque representations of "The Spendthrift" and "The Miser"—and Mr. Irving gave us a comic history of their amusing a party of friends by playing at "tableaux," the other day—stopping in their walk, and dressing these figures up with the shawls and bonnets

of the ladies. Our walk was varied with incidental questions of landscape-gardening, as we came to points which commanded the river-views more or less effectively ; and Mr. Irving made one remark which, I thought, embodied the whole science of wood-thinning, in ornamental grounds —that “a tree is only to be cut down when the picture it hides is worth more than the tree.”

But the event of the day, to me, was to be the drive through Sleepy Hollow. A live ramble through Fairy-land with Spenser, would hardly be a promise of more pleasure. Mr. Grinnell’s horses were at the door (after a dinner during which I marvelled at the inexhaustible frolicsomeness of the wit and spirit of the master of Sunnyside) and, though I should have preferred to take the trip, mounted from the Sketch-Book (Geoffrey Crayon on Van Tassel’s horse “Gunpowder,” and myself on the “Daredevil” of “Brom Bones”), I was very well contented, as it was. With my knees interlocked with Mr. Irving’s, as I sat facing him in the carriage, there was at least a shorter road for magnetism from him to me, than on two separate horses ; and, with so energetic a millionaire on the box with the driver, and a president of a railroad inside—to say nothing of the beloved lady who made one of our interior quartette—we were likely to be treated with respect, I think, by any hobgoblin with Dutch feelings in his bosom, or even by the “Headless Horseman,” should we be belated enough to meet him.

I should not omit, here, the mention of a little merriment at starting, which I, since, find myself remembering very vividly—the sudden discovery, among the group of nieces and grandnieces, that Mr. Irving was going for a warm ride with a thick coat on ; and the frolicsome pulling of him back from the carriage-door, stripping him to his shirt-sleeves, in spite of his remonstrances, and reclothing him in an over-all of brown linen, brought meantime from our host's dressing-room above. . The tender petting of the genial uncle by the half-dozen young ladies, and his humorous pleadings against the awkwardness of their forcible helpings off and on of his masculine habiliments, formed an exquisite picture—trifling, perhaps, in itself, but valuable as showing the charming *reality* of the temperament visible in his books. The playful and affectionate reciprocity between Geoffrey Crayon and his readers, is the key-note of Washington Irving's life at home.

\* \* \* \* \*

[On counting up my manuscript pages, dear Morris, I find that they will run, already, to the full extent of any letter that is to be read in the summer solstice—even Irving, where it was any way possible, having given but a short story at a time. “Sleepy Hollow,” besides, is a picture well worthy of a separate frame—so, for this week, will you content yourself with Sunnyside? Of our drive through the goblin-haunted glen, my next letter shall try to tell you.

Yours always.

## LETTER X VII.

Concluding Letter to Morris about the Visit to Mr. Irving—Protest against “Influence of the Air” of Sleepy Hollow—“Green Lane” character of the Road—No living Dutch Inhabitants to be seen—House of the Dutch Family who keep the Keys of the Hollow—Boyish Reminiscence of Mr. Irving’s—Monument of Andre—Haunted Bridge of Logs—Brom Bone’s Pumpkin—Character of Scenery—Oldest Church on the River—Family Tomb of the Irvings—Passing of Undercliff in the Rail-train—Philosophy of Mr. Irving’s Charm of Personal Character and Manner, etc., etc.

AUGUST 12, 1857.

I AM to go on, I believe, with the account of my privileged day passed with Mr. Irving—or, rather with a description of the drive in the afternoon through Sleepy Hollow. Like the gay horses we did it with, however, I must be indulged in a *pre-amble* before coming down to the plain trot of my narrative—entering my individual protest, that is to say, against the Sketch-Book’s rather sweeping theory as to the “influence of the air.” I mean to state nothing but what soberly occurred, and I dreamed no “dreams”—(except while looking into Mr. Irving’s dark eyes as I sat opposite him in the carriage, and those dreams of intercourse with a gifted spirit I could record only in verse)—yet you remember what he writes, of even stray visitors to

Sleepy Hollow: "However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative—to dream dreams and see apparitions." To which, as I said before, I enter my protest in the proper Latin of the law—*non est invent-us*—(let us *invent* nothing).

We wound out from the smooth-gravelled and circling avenues of "Wolfert's Dell," and took to the rougher turnpike leading to Tarrytown—following it, however, only for a mile or so, and then turning abruptly off to the right, at what seemed a neglected by-road to the hills. Of the irregular semicircle of Sleepy Hollow, this is the Sunnyside end—the other opening towards Tarrytown, which lies three miles further up the river.

Our road, presently, grew very much like what in England is called "a green lane," the undisturbed grass growing to the very edge of the single wheel-track; and this lovely carpeting, which I observed all through Sleepy Hollow, is, you know, an unusual feature for our country—the "spring work" on the highways, ordinarily (under the direction of the "path-master") consisting mainly in ploughing up the roadsides and matting up the ruts with the *ass-ass-inated* greensward. For the example of this charming difference I am ready to bless the bewitchment of the "high German doctor," or even to thank the ghost

of the "old Indian chief" who held his pow-wows there before the country was discovered.

With what attention I could take off from Mr. Irving's conversation and his busy pointings-out of the localities and beauties of the valley, I was, of course, on the lookout for the "Sleepy-Hollow Boys," along the road; but, oddly enough, I did not see a living soul in the entire distance! For the "Headless Horseman," it was, doubtless, too early in the afternoon. We had, neither of us, any expectation of being honored with an introduction to him. But I *did* hope for a look at a "Hans Van Ripper" or a "Katrina Van Tassel"—certainly, at the very least, for a specimen or two of the young Mynheers, "in their square-skirted coats with stupendous brass buttons," and "hair cued up in an eel-skin." Mr. Irving pointed out an old tumble-down farmhouse, still occupied, he said, by the Dutch family who traditionally "keep the keys to Sleepy Hollow," but there was not a soul to be seen hanging over the gate, or stirring around porch or cowyard. There were several other and newer houses, though still of the same model—(or, to quote exactly Mr. Irving's words, in reply to my remark upon it, "always built crouching low, and always overlooking a little fat meadow")—but they were equally without sign of living inhabitant. Yet read again what Mr. Irving says of the vegetating eternity of the inhabitants, in his own account of Sleepy Hollow, and

see how reasonable were my disappointed expectations in this particular.\*

One thing impressed me very strongly—the evidence there was, in Mr. Irving's manner from our first entrance into Sleepy Hollow, that the charm of the locality was, to him, no fiction. There was even a boyish eagerness in his delight at looking around him, and naming, as we drove along, the localities and their associations. He did not seem to remember that he had written about it, but enjoyed it all as a scene of childhood, then for the first time revisited. I shall never forget the sudden earnestness with which he leaned forward as we passed close under a side-hill heavily wooded, and exclaimed, "There are the trees where I shot my first squirrels, when a boy!" And, till the turn of the road put that hillside out of sight, he kept his eyes fixed with absorbed earnestness upon it, evidently forgetful of all around him but the past rambles and boy-dreams which the scene had vividly recalled. You will understand, dear

\* "I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud; for it is in such little retired Dutch valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great State of New York, that population, manners, and customs, remain fixed; while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those nooks of still water which border a rapid stream; where we may see the straw and bubble rising quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in the mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current. Though many years have passed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom."—*Sketch Book*.

Morris, how this little point was wonderfully charming to me—being such a literal verification, as it were, of one of the passages of his description of the spot, and one of those, too, of which the music lingers longest in the ear! “I recollect” (he says) “that when a stripling, my first exploit in squirrel-shooting was in a grove of tall walnut-trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noon-time, when all Nature is peculiarly quiet, and was startled by the roar of my own gun, as it broke the Sabbath stillness around, and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.” And, to drive through “this little valley” with the man who had so written of it, and have him point out “the tall walnut-trees” with such an outburst of boyish recollection—why, it was like entering with Thomson, under the very portcullis of the “Castle of Indolence!”

I should mention, by the way, that we pulled up, for a moment, opposite the monument of Major Andre, a marble shaft, standing at the side of the road and designating the spot (mentioned in “Sleepy Hollow”) where that unfortunate man was captured. I could not read the whole inscription, in the single minute that our impatient horses

stood before it, but the concluding sentence, in larger letters, stood out boldly—"HISTORY TELLS THE REST,"—and it was thrilling to read that reference to a more enduring record than marble, and turn one's eyes upon the hand by which the imperishable words had been just written!

We rattled along, with a very daylight disregard of "apparitions," past the "bridge of logs," which is such a haunted spot to the school-boys, and where the mounted Ichabod first felt the full terror of his pokerish ride; but, though I looked right and left for some trace of what frightened old "Gunpowder," it was not, it seemed to me, even a scary-looking spot—not only no footprints visible of the steed of the "headless horseman," but no posterity of pumpkins such as would spring naturally from the seed of Brom Bone's missile. Of course I have no manner of doubt of the entire veracity of the story; but would it not look better, dear Mr. Irving (assisting thus, the trembling, hesitating faith of a world so unbelieving), to broider the brook-sides around with a visible sign or two—sowing the fertile spot, I mean to say, with a supposititious family of haunted pumpkins.

A more beautiful intricacy of hill and dale than that winding road through Sleepy Hollow, I never saw. Everything in it seemed so precisely of the enjoyable size—woods, meadows, slopes, thickets and cornfields, all in the come-at-able and cozy quantity that looks just what you want

though too little for care. To have such a valley within horseback distance—a labyrinth to disappear into, when one wishes to be lost sight of by the world and by one's own troubled thoughts—is indeed a luxury of neighborhood. Mr. Irving sighed judiciously for it when young (in the sweet words just quoted), and he has enviably made his home so near it now. Beautiful as Sunnyside is, upon the bank of the wide-awake Hudson, it has Sleepy Hollow, with its tangled scenery, for a fly-net to troubled thoughts, just behind it. And, that he enjoys it, as all readers of the Sketch-Book—millions of them on both sides the water—would fervently pray that he might do, there was evidence, that afternoon, in the tranquil heart-smile so Indian-summered on his countenance.

After regaining the turnpike, at the other end of Sleepy Hollow, we made a call on Mr. Bartlett, at his famous country-seat which is allowed to be the most successful combination of taste and luxury in our country—house and grounds altogether nobly magnificent and seated worthily on one of the most commanding eminences of the Hudson—but my “well of wonder” was at the full. Promising myself, some day, a tramp with saddle-bags up and down the river, and take a leisurely look at all the marvels of taste and luxury on both sides, I was glad, for this time, to get away—glad to have my mind again, for its already eaten feast.

We drove rapidly towards Tarrytown, where I was to take the evening train for home; and, as we neared it, Mr. Irving pointed out to me the oldest church between Albany and New York, a small stone structure, whose narrow windows look as if they might have served also the purpose of embrasures—the church a citadel of retreat in the Indian wars. And, not far from it, was the burying-ground, to which, lately, the remains of the deceased members of the Irving family have been brought, from the business-crowded graveyards of the city. In a subdued tone, scarce audible, as if he were unconsciously thinking aloud during the silence with which we looked upon the spot, Mr. Irving said, “It is my own resting-place, and I shall soon be there.” And, neither in the cadence with which the words fell from his lips, nor in the change of expression which the stir of a deeper feeling naturally threw over the features, was there either painfulness or surprise. The utterance he had given to it was evidently the “calling by name” a familiar and welcome thought.

Our fast horses had performed their afternoon’s work to very nice calculation; and, in a minute or two after arriving at Tarrytown, I had taken leave of our efficient host and his delightful carriage-load, and was on my way to Idlewild with the evening train. We ran up to Undercliff in half an hour or so, and, whirling past, I tossed a vesper blessing upon the echo of our wheels which of course

reached you; and, as the evening star came out with her "obituary notice" of the departed day, I was at home—telling my wonderful adventures in Sleepy Hollow to the children who had sat up to hear them.

Of course I had often seen Mr. Irving—in the turmoil of the city and in the quiet of Idlewild—but I had never tried to understand, till this varied and delightful day, wherein lay the wondrous charm of his personal character and manner. Like everybody else who is so happy as to know him, I have yielded to the spell without caring to analyze it; and I do not know that I can speak with better knowledge of it now. I have brought away the impression, however, I may venture to say, that a *modesty* amounting almost to diffidence (a narrow escape, perhaps, of a want of sufficient self-confidence for the world we live in), and a most unusual degree of *instinctive deferential courtesy*, are the two natural qualities at the bottom of it. His intellectual culture, and his refinement and knowledge of the world, have, of course, given grace and ease to these sometimes embarrassing restraints; and genius, of course, with its intuitiveness of perception, does that finer justice with its looks and words which is so agreeable in social intercourse; but, in his presence, all alike seem made happier. "Mr. Irving" though it is, and far better worth expressing as is his thought than your own, he would rather listen than talk. And age, curiously enough, has not in the

least diminished his susceptibility. He gives to all that is said, the *mood* of attention which is most flattering to it—playful or grave with equal willingness and skill—reflecting what is offered to him, in his Claude-Lorraine glass of response, so that the sayer, at its return to him, is more pleased than when he said it. I noticed so often during that day of most familiar gossip, that no sentence of Irving's ever so lightly interrupted, was willingly resumed—no expression of a thought persevered in, if the listener took the thread up for himself. And yet this is the man who says—(quite sincerely, too, I have no doubt)—“I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration.”

\* \* \* \* \*

There was another leaf, my dear Morris, to the torn-up letter which I have thus rescued and put together—a concluding glance at Irving's literary career, as developed in his more recent work, the “Life of Washington,” the last volume of which he told me he was about sitting down to—but I will reserve that topic for a review. Closing where we are, this most venturesome personal mention of him, I remain,

Yours always.

## LETTER X V I I I .

Containing a Curious Story of a Hard-run Squirrel and two Celebrated  
Editors.

NOVEMBER 20.

WITH such a gloom over every fireside in the country, it might seem unfeeling, even if it were possible, to write gaily to you. The choice, however, between this apparent necessity to be grave, and the advisableness, on the other hand, of so toning our weekly music for the home circle as to change the key of their oppressive monotone of sadness, is, just now (for my otherwise willing pen), a most trying embarrassment. It is a common method of consolation, however, to show the sufferer, by parallel cases, that his calamity is but Nature's law—borrowing the illustrations from things animate or inanimate—and on this principle, I will venture to tell you a story of a HARD-RUN SQUIRREL AND HIS DEPOSITS. As the two gentlemen who "made the run" upon the banks in which the little stockholder was interested, were no less personages than two of the most celebrated journalists of New York, (Dana and De Trobriand), the fidelity of a reporter for the press will be

expected of me. Two other gentlemen who were witnesses of the "operation," (Hicks and Kensett, artists so well known to fame), are at hand, to correct any inaccuracy. My narrative, therefore, I take pains thus carefully to premise, may be looked upon as inevitably veracious.

It was an Indian summer's day at Idlewild—ten A.M. and breakfast just over. With the four gentlemen who had given us a charming quartette of brain play, over our coffee and bannocks, I led off with thick shoes and walking-stick—a quiet conversation-loiter through the glen, with the autumnal idleness of the air, being voted preferable to a drive. Ladies bade adieu to, for the morning, we took it leisurely from the back-door opening into the many aisles of our cathedral of fir-trees—even the smoke of my friends' cigars overpowered by the incense of Nature's evergreen worship swinging fragrantly from the countless censers of pine-tassels.

[Those last few lines, being rather poetical, may be omitted in the affidavit.]

We were bound, first, to the upper cascade; but, more at home than the others, in the wild tangles of the ravine, our friend De Trobriand, (the gay "chronicler" of the French journal of New York) had preferred to follow the drip-rock path, under the precipices closer to the brook. And I may so far anticipate my story as to record, that, in consequence of this blind belief in his own better guid-

ance to the spot, the wilful Baron got a tumble over the rocks—so bruising an exceedingly well developed leg (to the polished plumpitude of which I admiringly called attention, while Dana, his brother journalist of the *Tribune*, tenderly Florence-Nightingaled the bruises from a bottle of arnica), that he is likely to be a “better boy next time.”

But, to my narrative.

You remember our upper falls, and the single plank bridging the cascades at their middle leap. We had idled thus far, by the crooked path along the southern slope of the ravine, and, having crossed to the sunny side, were waiting for the Baron to overtake us. I had wiled the time by pointing out, to the two artists, the tall cliff, fifty feet above, which (to my mental eye) is crowned always with a *tableau vivant* of memory. There stands the beloved Bayard Taylor—for, as he bathed, one summer’s day, in the rocky basin below the fall, he was suddenly seized with an adventurous desire to see the view from the foam-encircled peak, so apparently inaccessible; and, clad simply in his hat (the point to which his toilet had arrived when the thought occurred to him), he had dashed through the spray and bounded with the agility of an antelope to the summit; and there, giddily poised, with arm uplifted, he had called to me in delighted wonder at the scene—the handsomest of unconscious Apollos, as he stood relieved against the sky, clad only in his happiness and his hat.

And, to the base of the same cliff, Hicks was now scrambling, with the intention probably to put the vision on canvas, and endeavoring to realize it, as far as was possible in his broadcloth and boots. And below, on the edge of the rapids, stood Kensett, his inspiring hand pulling at one end of his silken moustache, while his deep brown eyes were fixed dreamily on the sun-flecks in the foaming water. And the two Pressditti, meantime, (Dana and myself), seated on the rocks with professional decorum, were exchanging in friendly gossip, the public opinion that we probably should have been respectfully manufacturing, had we been seated at our editorial work-benches.

Suddenly there was a flutter among the dry leaves ; and along the giddy foot-path, hewn out of the slaty side of the precipice below the bridge, tripped the tamest of little squirrels. He took it leisurely, stopping every now and then and seating himself in his auto-easy-chair of a tail ; and presently, (the squirrel as we anticipated, being an *avant-courier*,) our expected loiterer limped slowly around the cliff. There was a dash of sadness over the fine-cut features of the Baron ; and, in answer to our tender inquiries as to his biography for the previous fifteen minutes, he entered upon the history of his *décadence*.

[And here commenced the panic of the dealer in corn-stocks.]

Whether frightened at the liveliness of our friend's well-

known powers of description, or at the slight French accent that still lingers in his wonderful fluency of English, the squirrel, at the first rush of emphasis in the Baron's tale, started from his. Down went those enviable limbs that serve alike the purposes of legs or arms, and away he scudded up the bank. But the bank was steep, and the gesticulating arms of the tall foreigner looked formidably prehensile. There was but one alternative—the bridge across the chasm. But alas ! with his loss of "confidence" the little corn-monger's usual foresight had forsaken him. He did not look ahead far enough to see, that, instead of taking him to the safe side of the glen, that narrow bridge ended in the very centre of a "large town in Cappadocia."\* Dana was astride of the far end of that single plank, his formidable lap presenting a toll-gate that there was no manner of getting round. Two-thirds across before he discovered this, the fugitive turned to go back. But, with the quickness of a practised sportsman, De Trobriand had closed up the retreat. Stopping in his story at the sight of the squirrel's blunder, he sprung to the bridge, and dropped his Parisian boots on either side of the plank ; and, there sat the two—a parenthesis of editors inclosing a very reasonably frightened topic of discussion !

\* DANA, a large town of Cappadocia.—*Classical Dictionary.*

[And now comes a phenomenon of natural history, to which I beg to call the attention of Professor Agassiz.]

After running backwards and forwards, in terrified perplexity, for two or three minutes, the little victim came to a stand still and proceeded coolly to reason upon it. He looked first at one side and then at the other. The two ends of the plank were laid on the ledges of the two opposite banks, and, by jumping across the barricade of the *Tribune* on one side, or that of the *Courrier des Etats Unis* on the other, he might, at least, land on a rocky precipice with the danger only of slipping off as he should alight, and so falling into the torrent below.

And this he decided to do—but, observe the almost human reason shown in his two or three subsequent expedients!

His two cheek-pouches (he was a ground-squirrel, you understand, one of the *tamias lysteri*, with pockets in his face), were swollen to their utmost distension with his morning's pick-up of provender. With a knowing alternation of his sharp eyes from one desperate outlet to the other, he evidently made up his mind that it would be easier to overleap the Frenchman than the Yankee; but he came to the conclusion also after carefully measuring the jump, that *he could not do it, and carry weight.* He quietly disgorged, therefore, upon the centre of the plank, eight or ten kernels

of corn, and thus lightened, run to the edge. But here a new thought occurred to him.

You recollect the long hickory sapling which serves as a balustrade to that otherwise giddy bridge over the torrent. Up one of the pine cleats which support this slight railing, ran the squirrel, evidently seeing that he could jump to more advantage from this higher point. But sitting here for a moment, to gather his courage and his forces, he bethought himself, that, *with the jump thus made easier, he might carry more weight*; and, descending again to the bridge, *he picked up one-half of his previously disgorged corn, stowed it safely in his cheek-pockets, ascended again to the top of the railing, and made the jump he had previously projected*. To my great relief, he alighted safely, and, with the wreck he had saved from his threatened bankruptcy, he ran up the slanting ledge of the precipice and disappeared.

Here were certainly evidences of uncommon intelligence in this little animal—his sudden command of coolness in emergency, his deliberate choice between two evils, his prudential lessening of hindrance, his reconsideration of plan after a new light upon the matter, and the final proof how wisely he had calculated the possible savings from his first over-hasty “assignment,” and how well he had measured his powers for the last desperate leap. It is a story

worthy of perusal in Wall street, or of copying into Thompson's Bank-note Reporter.

Our two artist friends had climbed up the cliff and were spectators, like myself, of this interesting little pantomime —five of us, as I before said, to certify to its literal veracity. The great Natural Philosopher of Harvard will be safe, therefore, in enriching Science with the data thus circumstantially recorded.

The squirrel drama concluded, we went on our winding way through the tangles of the ravine—scrambling, loitering, and gossiping, amid the autumn leaves and the golden sunshine, and along the rapids of the brook—and, at the country dinner-time of two, reached home, happy and hungry. As I have already mentioned, the baron's bleeding abrasures were tenderly ministered to by his two brother editors, before dinner, and the remainder of the day was given over to a blessed forgetfulness of news, and the consequent social spontaneities.

And thus, dear Morris, you have a true leaf from my day-book at Idlewild, and I remain

Yours as ever.

## L E T T E R X I X.

Ancient Duty of Hospitality—Chance for it at Newburgh—The Boats up and down—Trip to Poughkeepsie—Passengers on the Day-boat—Missing the Down-boat—Adventures in Poughkeepsie—The splendid Straw Hat for a Sign, and its Eager Acquisition—A whole Child, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *September. 1857.*

IT was an ancient duty of hospitality to see a parting guest a mile upon his way; and, at just about the cost and trouble of the one farewell mile of old times, the resident upon the Hudson can now make it a farewell of ten, twenty, or thirty. To step on board the steamer with a friend, and go up or down the river to the first or second landing-place beyond, and return by the counter-boat, up or down, is not only a matter of no trouble and of very trifling cost, but it forms a most agreeable excursion of an hour or two—familiarizing the eye to the beautiful scenery of the river, and terminating a period of hospitality with the excitement of a pleasure.

Newburgh is particularly well placed for this kind of excursion. Taking the “morning boat” which starts down the river, at seven, we disembark, an hour after, at West Point; walk up and see the parade and hear the band; re-embark in the “up-boat” at ten, and land again at New-

burgh at eleven. More variety could scarcely be compressed into four hours (all for twenty-five cents passage each way !) the seeing of strangers and meeting of acquaintances on two different steamers, the glide each way through the magnificent pass of the Highlands, the unsurpassed scenery of West Point and its military parade and music—amusements so thickly crowded, and the pleasure, besides, of accompanying a friend ten miles upon his journey.

Or if, instead of returning to the city, the departing guest is bound to Niagara or the Springs, we embark upon the "*up-boat*" which touches at eleven, and which reaches Poughkeepsie (fifteen miles above) a few minutes before the "*down-boat*" touches at the same place to bring us back to Newburgh; an excursion of thirty miles (for the same money), the scenery most lovely, the absence only three hours; and the Hudson River rail-train coming along every two hours, either to expedite the return or to remedy any shortcomings by delay or irregularity of boats. The central position of Newburgh, between two such starting-points as Albany and New York—the half-way stopping-place on such a crowded and universal thoroughfare as the Hudson River—gives it these advantages for pleasure as well as for convenience, making it the most desirable neighborhood in the whole country for either summer stay or permanent residence. The romantic scenery, and the exceeding

healthfulness of its mountain air, are charms which speak for themselves; and when the proposed railroad to the East shall meet the line of our Erie Branch, making Newburgh the centre of the largest cross of travel in this western world, it is likely to be more quarrelled for, by Business and Taste, than was ever spot of earth before—these two great money-spillers striving, (while Storm-King and Skunnemunk look on) to see which shall sooner build up or more give its own character to our mountain metropolis.

This geography and these local statistics, however, are altogether in spite of the intention astride this evening upon my quill. I started to jot down only what personal adventures befell us recently, in performing the duty of hospitality specified above, viz. accompanying a party of our friends as far as Poughkeepsie, on their way from our quiet hermitage to Saratoga. We had a befalling or two, from lack of foresight and management, the narration of which may possibly be instructive, no less for the information it contains than as showing the practice of a virtue under difficulties.

It was a brilliant morning when our accommodating “census” (the green wagon, so called, which makes a daily report of our family population on the road) stood at the door. We were to drive our friends to Newburgh to take the Albany “day-boat up;” and the thought of accompany-

ing them as far as Poughkeepsie was rather impromptu—the suggestion being acceded to immediately, however, as our absence (by boat) would be only three hours, and the horses had stood many a time longer than that, constant to a certain affectionate stone post, and with a busily thronged sidewalk to amuse them. Dinner was to wait us but an hour later than usual, and, with sighs and good-byes pocketed for the present, we joyously devoured the five miles of summer's morning spread like a feast between Idlewild and Newburgh.

The "Alida" came along rather later than usual—wind and tide against her and no competition—and the admirably arranged decks and saloons (for she is quite the most luxuriously contrived as well as fastest boat on the river) were comfortably thronged with passengers. The steam-family of a day to which we were thus added had the "new sprinkle" observable at present in all our crowds—a returned Californian or two, out on excursions for pleasure with their rejoined wives and children. The ready-made clothes which so faintly smart up the worn-out and exhausted husband with his fierce eye and dyed beard; the unaccustomed and ill-chosen millinery of the care-worn and newly fashionable mother; and the awkward-feeling children with their new shoes, gingerbread and candy, are groups to be seen, just now, in the drawing-rooms of all our hotels, and on board all our steamers and rail-cars.

Was there ever a country before, where the consciousness of gentility and equality could be assumed, without a misgiving, in a day—where every man actually feels that he is “as good as anybody” with but the means to dress and travel? Awkwardly as they do it, and ill at ease as they must now and then be, from a comparison which their sharp eyes cannot avoid, there is a charm in the *freedom to try it* which makes America a Paradise. It will be long before there will be instances of emigration back again, to the lands of smock-frocks and velveteen Sunday-clothes.

As we approached Poughkeepsie, we discovered, to our surprise and disappointment, that the race with the “opposition line” had so combined with wind and tide to hasten the coming along of the “down-boat” (by which we expected to return) that both steamers were leaving the landing as we approached it—this unusual precedence of arrival reducing us to the alternative of a passage back by the earliest passing train upon the railroad. Sighs over the horses we had left tied to the stone post at Newburgh, and prayers for their resignation to prolonged flies and hunger, were mingled with the farewells to our friends; and both were very considerably set “to music”—the steam-engine of the “Glencove” gasping out Yankee Doodle as she sped down the river, and the other boat having a competition band in full operation as she gave chase. A hasty inquiry, upon the pier, informed us that

a "down-train" had just gone by—another not to start before two hours and a half! And, for that interminable time (with unfed horses tied to a post fifteen miles off), we were adrift upon Poughkeepsie.

But things began presently to look better. To all four of us, Poughkeepsie was entirely new. My three companions had only passed it in steamer and rail-car, and I but remembered it as the place where we used to get excellent waffles, in the days of stage-coaching to Albany. We had stumbled on a pleasure unexpectedly—a ramble in a strange place with nobody to know us! New shops, perfect liberty to look in at the windows! New people and ourselves to do the staring and remarking. To one of the ladies of our party more especially—a most distinguished and lovely person—it was something of a let-up to have a whole town, in which, for a delightful hour or two, she could be nobody in particular! Ah, what easing of unobserved hats! what loosing of prim bonnet-strings and letting go of ceremonious arms! The human soul is naturally a vagabond—we all agreed as we gipsied, loose and happy, through the streets of Poughkeepsie.

Away from home (most persons have observed,) Nature's inward clock resumes its simple periodicity; and it was exactly noon when we all made a simultaneous confession of appetite—stopping with desiring eyes before a row of musk-melons spread on the sidewalk in front of

a vegetable shop at a prominent corner. In the portly figure and trustworthy features of the gentleman behind the counter in the cellar (for it was two steps down from the sidewalk, and it is curious how vegetables, like oysters, seem only genuine when offered subterraneously for sale), we recognized, as we supposed, both an influential citizen and a responsible judge of ripe melons. We venture to warn Poughkeepsie, however, that "John Brooks" (the name on the sign) is, at least, not the latter. With a full disavowal of our own inexperience, we trustfully and affectionately threw ourselves on his practised knowledge; and four more melon-cholic unripenesses have not come to a premature end this fruitful season, than those which I carried on my arm for a believing distance, through the street, having faith in John Brooks and looking out for knives and forks in some friendly shelter. In the back parlor of an "Ice-Cream Saloon"—a snug apartment furnished with a Bible and Hymn-book, four chairs, two tables and a looking-glass—we finally sat down to our disappointments. It was rather a "piling on of the agony" to propose ice-cream and lemonade (the only articles for sale on the premises), as we tasted our last raw expectation; but it will show where consolation is to be found in extremity, when I state, that as my eyes chanced to fall on the large family Bible (to which, and the looking-glass, the good woman's customers were evidently welcome free of charge), behold,

upon the top of it, a loaf of bread, just left by the baker! Poughkeepsie is rich in the maker of such bread; it is the object of this paragraph to say, crisper crust and lighter soft came never from a baker's oven. We sat around this single loaf, thankfully and appetizingly, and made our noon meal—upon it, and it only. It would be a favor to our Poughkeepsie subscribers if I had thought to bring away the name of such bread's baker. I can neither give that, nor the name of the good woman of whom they would do well to inquire it. She had no sign, if I remember rightly—but her shop and Bible are just above the “Shampooing Saloon” of “George Grimm,” and a little below the milliner's window in which stands advertised the “Agency for Mrs. Durno's medicines”—(the connection between which two branches of business, by the way, we tried in vain to conjecture).

Poughkeepsie differs from Newburgh in having its shopping-street high on the hill instead of down by the river. The shops (and we sighed for a cooler *climb*, in mounting to them under a noonday sun), are wonderfully metropolitan—quite ahead, indeed, of our own thriving little country-town, in that gay particular. We wondered most at the unprecedented preponderance of shoe-stores. How can three-fourths of the business of a town (and the proportion is that, at least), be occupied with the supply of this comparatively minor human want? There were some

German shoemakers among them, and we noticed a "lager bier" shop, by the way, with a word for its sign—WELKOM-MEN—(the German for *welcome*, I believe), which would be a charming name for a hospitable man's country-seat. It sounds well and means well. There was another sign hung out in front of a blacksmith's shop—a live rat suspended by the tail to a lamp-post—but it would be following the custom of too many travellers to speak of a single instance of incidental cruelty as common to the place. By the complete inattention of the blacksmith's boys (who were hammering away at the forge without even a look at their struggling victim), he had the aggravation of being forgotten before death—and, of such treatment (much worse than the mortal agony, for those of whom the world makes examples), Poughkeepsie should at least be incapable.

I have a tribute to offer to Poughkeepsie—let me hasten, after this, qualifyingly to say. Broadway must yield to it in *hats!* As every gentleman knows, the type of this article of man's attire had sadly degenerated, of late years—no such thing as a covering for the head, which is in any way becoming, being now, anywhere, obtainable. The world's idea of the article has become confused. What was the surprise of my dressy friend B. (the guest who had accompanied us) and myself, therefore, to see before us, in the street of Poughkeepsie—hung out upon a projecting

wire in front of Mr. Van Kleeck, the hatter—a very admirable model of a hat! We stopped suddenly and silently before it. A living mastodon, unicorn, or specimen of any extinct race of animals, would have been a hardly less wondrous apparition. It was not a dress hat—not of beaver or its imitations. It was simply of coarse straw; and (we found presently, on inquiry) made originally to be hung out as a sign. To this happy accident was owing its escape from the Decline of Head-coverings—(in which, by the way, let us venture to remark, the heads of the other sex are even further gone than our own)—and though dusted and discolored by the sun and rain (for we understood that it had swung three summers unrecognized at the shop-door), the type of its first form was still visible. In the amplitude and ease of brim, in the reciprocal proportion of brim and crown, and in the oneness of utility and grace, there was an ideal that Vandyke or Titian would have conceived—supposing that either of those head-honoring artists, that is to say, had been employed by Beebe (with the aid of a “medium,”) to take the modern hat and conceive upon it a fashion for '56. It was a hat liberal without slouchiness, faultless and unsuperfluous without being meanly neat, pliable enough for the head and yet elastically firm enough not to caricature itself by losing shape with handling or a high wind. Nobody stares at it particularly (for I have worn it now a week),

yet it would have been a hat to look better in, a hundred years ago, or to look better in a hundred years hence. Poughkeepsie's one immortal production for seventy-five cents!

A wonderfully beautiful child, sitting on Mr. Van Kleeck's counter, confirmed my opinion that the Titian-esque hat was not altogether a thing of accident. The sense of beauty (by the two proofs of effortless paternity —the production of matchless hat and child), resides, perhaps unconsciously, in the Poughkeepsie hatter. So singular was the beauty of this little girl of six years old, that my friend and I went back for our ladies (who were resting at the ice-cream saloon while we took an additional walk), bringing them a long distance in the hot sun rather than let them lose the sight of her. Her large brown eyes were glowing warmly in a face of Roman mould. Not a feature was unfulfilled of its errand of development, and the smile and the look upwards, as we spoke to her, were noble and calmly good. Such marvels of *Nature's meaning, all expressed*, should be set aside and kept to be the mothers of our Presidents. With the human form degenerating on our continent (as I fear there is no denying that it is—by our overwork, hurry-feeding and base excitements), it is worth a town's while to pride itself on its exceptions—the producing and cherishing of them. How much worthier of education and costly care is such a

*simply whole child*, than the pale little overdressed punyisms—stunted with indigestion and spoilt temper—that one sees at the hotels and watering-places!

But our happy two hours and a half of vagabondage were meantime diminishing ; and, with Mr. Van Kleeck's sign in my hand (done up in a respectable newspaper bundle till out of reach of the inhabitants to whose eyes it had been long familiar), we returned down street to the railway. Various brilliant shops had attracted our attention. In hardware and dry goods Poughkeepsie certainly eclipses Newburgh—our streets of villas and private residences, however, having an abundantly compensating superiority to those of Poughkeepsie. We were pleased by receiving a polite bow from Mr. John Brooks, whom we chanced to meet at a little distance from his cellar—a recognition of our melon-cholic custom which spoke well for the town's prompt eye to business. Two droll names on signs attracted our attention—“Elvy Deyo,” and “F. Groscop.” The steam-whistle was punctual. We took our places in the cars, and in half an hour were at Fishkill—in half an hour more across by Ferry to Newburgh—and in half an hour more (the stone post having proved strong enough to hold our horses, flies and hunger notwithstanding), we were within sight of our dinners at Idlewild.

## L E T T E R   X X .

Jake and Quinty once more—A Poem to Jake's Memory—The Dog the Under-valued of this Earth—De Trobriand's Obituary of Jake—Present of a new Dog, from a Stranger—Bell's getting him Home—Jerry's Character and his hatred of a Gentleman—Bianca Raventail and Kitty Grizzle—Dog Friendship and its Nature—Monody on Quinty, by a Distinguished Lady of Boston, etc.

OCTOBER, 1857.

PARDON should, perhaps, be asked, of the kind and indulgent reader, for another reference to the two deceased friends of whose virtues I wrote in the *Home Journal* of a previous date. My two dogs, Jake and Quinty were there mourned over ; and, (after an obituary, if not before), the grass of forgetfulness upon such humble graves may be left to grow. I have received, however, to-day, a poem of such affectionate commemoration of Jake, my favorite of the two, that I cannot resist giving it to the reader—thanking tenderly, at the same time, the stranger thus bravely willing to own to a sympathy with a four-legged sorrow. Let me premise, only, that the theory upon which the poem is woven (the comfort of a refuge in friendship when too old for love) was scarce applicable to Jake, who died in the prime and pride of puppyism unabated—loving and spunky, I believe to his dying hour.

The departed tail (I understood his previous mistress to say) had wagged but four brief years; and his transfer to Idlewild, of course, was not from superannuation. With this slight correction, the tribute to his memory reads touchingly and truly:

### “JAKE”—A REQUIEM.

Sing a requiem for Jake,  
Once so beautiful and young;  
Sleeping now, no more to wake;  
Let a solemn dirge be sung!  
Weep, oh willow, o'er his head—  
Jake is dead!

Born to be a beauty's pet,  
Nurtured in her maiden lap;  
Ah, methinks I see him yet,  
Sipping from her palm his pap!  
In that paradise with her,  
Happy cur!

Sped the time—and how he grew!  
Pleasures, ah, how swift they move!  
Blissful moments, how they flew!  
*Jake was soon too old to love.*  
Gentle, joyous, strong and bold,  
*But too old!*

Oh, the cheating dream of youth!  
Oh, the dreary days beyond!  
Dog or man how sad the truth:—  
Woman's heart no more is fond  
When the bloom of youthful years  
Disappears!

Jake must find another home;  
Jake must find another heart;  
Wheresoever he may roam,  
Now from *her* he must depart!  
Go it, Jake! the fates have smiled—  
*Idlewild!*

Leave a mistress—find a friend—  
Find affection *for thy worth*,  
Lasting, till thy life shall end!  
And, beside his glowing hearth,  
Growl defiance to despair  
And the fair.

Up the hill and down the glen,  
By the river, o'er the lea,  
Follow him my truthful pen!  
What a happy dog was he!  
Ever at his MASTER's side  
Till he died.

Now no guardian at the gate,  
No swift herald at the door;  
Bower and garden desolate,  
He is romping there no more;  
Silent, avenue and lawn—  
Jake is gone!

Lay him kindly by the brook,  
Deep beside the resting stone.  
In the cool secluded nook  
Where he loved to muse alone!  
This strange legend o'er him penned  
A true friend.

But with all the excuse that such charming poetry may give, for cumbering the overladen memory of the world by

a re-mention of forgotten dogs, I have still a better apology for re-cur-ing to Jake and Quinty. I will beg the reader to let me be tediously instructive for a moment, while I explain.

I have long had a feeling that THE DOG was among the Cruelly Undervalued of the earth. With qualities that are, every one, numbered among our rarest virtues, the mere mention of him is an expression of contempt. To say that any man is "a dog" vilifies him to the last extremity of language, while, if this same fellow being had the virtues of a dog he would be better than most men. With an intention in store to write, some day, upon this flagrant wrong of misappreciation, (to do proper honor, that is to say, to the creature who is virtuous without present or future inducement—who is faithful, brave, constant, unselfish, docile and affectionate, with neither a good name in this world nor the promise of a heaven beyond), I at last expressed my sentiments incidentally in the tribute to my own two domesticated outdoers; and of the moral effect of this just though tardy tribute, I have evidence which rewards and delights me. A French gentleman, who had read the translation of the article (for it was admirably translated by our brilliant friend Baron de Trobriand, and republished in the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*), was met in Broadway with unusual eagerness in his countenance. "I am out to find a dog, he said, to the friend who in-

quired into his excitement and hurry. "Since reading about 'Jake,' I can live no longer unblest by such a friendship?" Perhaps it is worth while, both as a specimen of the exquisite translation by our friend and as a repetition of the vindictory sentiment of which the effect was thus salutary, to quote again, in its more attractive French dress, the principal passage:

"Ce serait une profanation de marquer d'une croix le rocher au pied duquel ces deux chiens aimés gisent enterrés—et pourtant combien d'hommes pour qui le Sauveur est mort peut être, et sur la sépulture desquels il n'y aura pas de deuil pareil à celui, dans lequel tout Idle Wild est plongé pour Jake et Quinty;—combien qui remercieraient Dieu si seulement la sainte croix de leur tombe devait être arrosée d'autant de pleurs qu'en ont versés nos enfants sur ces pauvres animaux compagnons de leurs jeux! Il est dur à croire que deux races aussi liées l'une à l'autre que l'homme et le chien, ne puissent pas se retrouver là haut—dur à comprendre que certains chiens ne méritent pas d'être sauvés plus que certains hommes, et certains hommes de pourrir en terre profane et d'être oubliés à jamais plus que certains chiens. Créatures si intelligentes, et pourtant si soumises à notre négligence—si sensibles et pourtant si pleines de pardon pour notre rudesse et notre ingratitudo! si douces quand nous ne semblons pas les aimer, si joyeuses quand nous leur témoignons quelque affection! si résignées même à la faim quand nous ne sommes pas prêts à les nourrir—même à l'orage et à la pluie quand nous les renvoyons d'un foyer pétillant, pendant les nuits d'hiver, pour veiller sur notre sommeil dans des lits chauds! Si prêts à combattre et à mourir pour nous et les moindres choses qui nous appartiennent! Certainement, pour de pareilles qualités, bien qu'elles cheminent à quatre pattes—qualités qui honoreraien un chrétien ou un héros—la religion devrait avoir quelque vestibule extérieur. Il me semble que nous pouvons bien laisser l'enfant prier pour que, dans ce ciel des humbles où on lui apprend que le mendiant qui reçoit l'aumône peut être placé plus

haut que lui, il soit permis à son chien fidèle de regarder au moins par la porte ouverte."

And to this sentiment of respect for Jake and Quinty, there was still another response—curious enough in some of its particulars, perhaps to be interesting to the general reader.

A gentleman, living at some distance (a stranger to us but a reader of the *Home Journal*) touched with the manner in which our heroic favorite had fallen a victim to a pack of prowling night-dogs, sent courteously to know if we would like "*an avenger of his death*"—he having a mastiff of very retributive size and temper whom he should be glad to present to us. Charmed with the idea of sleeping at last in undisturbed peace and poultry, as well as with bringing Jake's outnumberers to speedy jaw and justice, I at once gratefully accepted the gift. The steamers were fixed upon by which he should be sent to New York and up the river; and (after some deliberation), it was decided that "Avenger" should be his name—"Jerry" (the last syllable softened and with a tail to it) for the nickname of his less terrible moments.

On the night when Avenger was to arrive, the children were allowed to "sit up"—their curiosity to have a sight at him, before going to bed, being quite too eloquent to resist. It was even more tedious waiting than we had anticipated, however. The evening boat had wind and

tide against her, and Don Cesar de Bazan (our used-up-edest farm-horse who had gone down in the lumber-wagon to bring up the dog) was habitually noncommittal in his movements. But the delays were not altogether in slow wheels and foundered knees. It was half-past ten before Bell made his appearance, looking like a man who had come out of a "free fight," and significantly wanting to know whether there was *anything more* for him to do, that night! "That critter" was tied up in the stable, and he himself was "pretty nigh done." As to riding a mile in a wagon, after dark, "with a new dog of that size," it had "called for what there was in him, of one sort and another," and he didn't much believe he should want to do it again. In fact the history of "bringing up that passenger from the boat" (which he was "too mad to give us that night," and "much as ever he could keep his dander down" to do it the next morning) was full of stirring event. "Jerry" was willing enough to come ashore at Cornwall; but, to mount into a strange wagon and start on an unknown journey with a gentleman of rather compulsory manners, was not to be done without some expression of dog reluctance. He scared everybody on the dock, "the way he flew round," and, once in, he did nothing but jump out and nearly upset the wagon with his tremendous strength; and the fear that he would "chaw off the rope, or hang himself" prevented the simply dragging him be-

hind. It was "nothing but stopping every few steps, and coaxing and lifting him in again;" and "an armful of dog like that, on a dark night, when it was half and half whether he was going to let you," Bell thought "too risky for pleasure." I shall long remember his story of that mile of persuasion—especially since knowing more of the animal's very-likely-bilities.

With knowing that Avenger had come, and with hearing his bark, down at the stable (more like a Mammoth Cave with a hoarse cold than anything else), the children were obliged to be contented. They went to bed to dream of the monster it was not safe to go and see with only a lantern's knowledge of his length of rope; and, the next morning, long before Bell had begun to rub down Poniatowski (my boy's black pony, for which the dog would be a very fair match, in double harness) they were at the stable door. It was an introduction without any mutual change of civility, and I must shorten this long story by coming at once to the curious characteristics that have developed in a month's acquaintance, and which make the animal (it has seemed to me) worthy of zoölogical study. I have been obliged to part with him (I should meantime explain) as his opinions of people were considerably at variance with my own, and his tastes and manners (very likely, any day, to eat up the wrong man, that is to say) were of very improbable adaptation to Idlewild wishes.

Jerry, in the first place, we soon discovered, *hated a gentleman*. The contrary is commonly remarked of dogs, I believe—most of them having an instinctive preference for a well-bred and well dressed person. But, while working-men and the various fishermen and others, who make our wooded lane a thoroughfare between the back roads and the river, were allowed to pass the stable wholly unnoticed, the most hostile demonstration awaited every respectably dressed visitor or stranger. His classifications were a little curious, too, for his hatred of colored people amounted to a negro-phobia. He nearly demolished the dear old cook, on the first morning, though she went out to cultivate his acquaintance, with a plate of cold victuals in her hand; and, as the members of our family bearing this objectionable complexion amount to six, his counter balancing fondness for children, of whom we have only four, did not equalize the vote in his favor. I was prepared for this latter avowal of his tastes, by our friend, Mr. Harper, who chanced to come up the river with him, in the evening boat, and who told us it was quite a scene, on the forward deck where he was tied—his ferocious unwillingness to be even approached by the black waiters, who were sent to feed him. They were obliged to get one of the white “hands” to do it, at last, and they afterwards gathered quite a crowd by their various experiments at colored propitiation—all in vain.

It was a charm in Jerry, however, that his likings were as strong as his dislikings ; and one of these, (though his unconquerable aversion to myself, would scarce lead me to look on him very poetically), amounted, I must own, to a poem. Let me premise by explaining that we have two cats in the family, of very different standing and duties. Miss Bianca Ravential, a snow-white lady-puss with a jet-black tail, is of really magnificent beauty, and lives principally in the parlor—"lapt in Elysium," if children's laps can any way do it, but merely and indolently ornamental. Plain Kitty Grizzle, on the contrary, has shown no manner of taste for society on carpets, never even approaching the house, and wholly content with the stable, where her mousings are invaluable—a shy, lean, ill-looking, unsociable, grey little utility, whom we respect if questioned on the subject, but for whom nobody feels any affection. It was the first thought of every one, on seeing the cavernous jaw of the avenger, that either of the cats would be but a mouthful to him ; and an attempt was made to pre-monish him as to Bianca, by taking her in our arms and introducing her, at a safe distance, to his chained-up consideration and acquaintance. The savage ferocity with which he recognized her, however, and her own variations of *cat-alepsy*, while near him, satisfied us that friendly relations between them, were even spasmodically unlikely ; and it was the continually repeated and exciting family drama,

every day, as long as he stayed, to get down Miss Raventail from the tree in which she had taken refuge, and at the foot of which sat this devouring monster.

But now comes the poetry of the matter. The other cat, whom we supposed eaten and digested on the second day of his being at large, was found *sitting upright on his back*, as he lay half-crouched on the stable floor ; and, from that time, she was unwilling to leave him for a single moment. Cats are said to have attachment for *places* only—(not for *people*, that is to say, and still less for dogs)—but this little creature stuck to Jerry, when he accompanied Bell to his work in the ravine, far away from the stable, and, (to the entire neglect of her little family of mice) she followed him everywhere about the grounds, as a dog follows his master. The neighbors were called in as they passed, to see the curious picture, for she seemed to have no resting-place but his back. He was wholly unconcerned, while she walked about upon him—scarce larger than one of his paws, and sitting on his head, his shoulders, or his hips—and, invariably, when the stable door was opened in the morning, she lay coiled up in the bow-knot of his affectionate legs. Only once he was heard to growl faintly, when she helped herself a little too freely to his plateful of cold meat, but she rubbed her little back against his muzzle and took no notice of it. She evidently feared nothing in his company—always, before, scampering

under the stable at the approach of any one, but, with him, going anywhere through our wild ravine without alarm. It is certainly a most singular case of elective-magnetism, and the study of the anti-common-place reciprocities between Avenger and Plain Kitty, has led me to look for more variety in the character of cats and dogs.

I had almost forgotten to describe Jerry's personal appearance. He was a pure mastiff, of the largest size, with the fine head of his race (which is longer and more intellectual than the bull-dog's,) and with full brain and beautiful eyes. His forward parts, chest and legs, were magnificently powerful, but his hind quarters were wiry and formed only for activity. From his never wagging what tail he had (not even to Bell, whom and the grey kitten he seemed to "love, and love only"), and from his aversion to ladies, whom he greeted always with a growl, I should have thought him naturally unamiable, but that he was magnanimous in taking no manner of notice of any dog smaller than himself, and that he apparently felt indulgent, to children. When half-couchant, he was a noble picture of power in repose; but when on his legs (from the mere-ness of indispensability of his after parts) he looked like a Daniel Webster not done justice to by *posteri-ty*.

But Jerry is gone, and Plain Kitty Grizzle is a widow "the worst way." With all deference to our distant friend (the kind presenter) we could not keep him, though i'

were also to perpetuate a poem and make happy the usefulness member of our family. She runs from place to place, looking for him, and makes sad *mew-sic*—but he was a terror to gentlemen and to ladies, and Idlewild's good name was at stake. The stranger is not to be frightened, either from the outer gate or inner door. Kitty and we are open to another friendship, however, and if any reader has a “Jake” or “Quinty” for us, we have cold meat and tenderness in store.

It will be seen (to return for a moment to our moral) that we are not insisting on the perfectability of the canine species. We are ready to allow that there are not only mad dogs and “sad dogs,” but bad dogs. The many unrewarded virtues of the animal are not universal. But the good dogs are by far the majority, and it is for the sake of these that we wish to suggest *some elevation of the dog in the scale of human estimation, and consequently better treatment*. The faithful watch-dog, turned out on the bitterest cold night to his weary duty, solitary and unclad, should at least have his box, sheltered from the wind and well lined with straw. When sick, lame or wounded, he should be tended and ministered to; and above all he should be kindly treated and punctually fed. Keep an eye on it, for a day or two, if you wish to know how often the dog’s meal is entirely forgotten! As to his education,

it is perhaps, too soon to speak of dog alphabet and primer ; but his temper (which is really a marvel, as well as a model, considering the abuses and caprices to which he is subject) might be better trained and more considered than it is ; and as, with all his unmerited ignominy and neglect, he has preserved so many of the virtues that we value in a friend, let us venture, at the close of our little sermon, to recommend (for all who are lonely and have sympathies to spare) the CULTIVATION OF DOG FRIENDSHIP.

P. S. As the ink dries upon this last sentence, the mail comes in, bringing a letter from one of the most accomplished and admirable of women, (well known and honored in Boston as "one of the Barclays") and a poem from her pen to the memory of "Quinty"—whom she knew. She says : "I present my condolences on the death of your two favorites to whom you have dedicated such an affecting page in dog story. I had not the pleasure of an acquaintance with 'Jake,' but 'Quinty' was certainly sufficiently ugly to be long remembered. There must be a peculiar fascination in such an extreme absence of what we all admire so much—beauty. How admirable is De Trobriand's translation of your article on the subject ! We read it over and over again. Translations are so difficult, particularly from English into French ; but this is perfect." And thus run our friend's musical verses :

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF THE "QUINTESSENCE OF UGLINESS,"  
COMMONLY CALLED "QUINTY."

Of the ugliest dog in the town  
All mourn the untimely decease ;  
In the bloom of his fame and renown  
He has fled from our presence in peace.

His ugliness, many would say,  
Exalted him far above all :  
But then every dog has his day,  
And Quinty was destined to fall.

Just under the roughest of coats  
He carried the warmest of hearts :  
The longest of bodies and throats—  
Was a dog of most excellent parts.

Devoted to master and friend,  
Beloved and gentle and true—  
Oh when would my monody end  
Should I sum up his virtues to you

The moral of this my sad lay  
Remember and faithfully keep ;  
Locked up in the mind let it stay—  
That *beauty at best is skin deep.*

## L E T T E R   X X I.

Bianca Raventail's behavior to a Wild-cat Cousin—A Secret too romantic to be kept—Bayard Taylor and our Friend the Judge—Taylor's Friendship and his fellow Traveller—His Letter—Description of his German Home—Offer of Capital to Taylor, by Col. Perkins of Boston—Romance of Taylor's Life, etc.

### DECEMBER.

THE thirtieth of November, and winter has closed upon us (thus early!) his frosty door. The double sleigh took us to church to-day, and the river, usually the lightest feature in the landscape, ran, inky black, through the pass of the snow-white Highlands. Church bells and sleigh-bells rang the "meeting time" together. A hickory log, on the library fire! And now the heart, like the warm house, feels snow-shut—cut off from its green carpet of summer sympathy with the world at large, and, with feet on the hearth, snug-humored and confidential.

I must first mention to you (us-two-ically trusting to your kind indulgence, dear reader!) the virtuous example, set us yesterday, by Miss Bianca Raventail (our snow-white parlor cat with the jet-black continuation), in the matter of setting aside trifling differences and behaving graciously to country cousins. We live, as you perhaps know, within

a mile and a half of the mountain base which forms the edge of the Highland wilderness—a desolate and almost trackless region, still inhabited by most of the aboriginal “varmint;” particularly those wild-cat relatives of the feline members of our family, half way between the panther and the parlor puss. With the first snow, it is the sport of our rustic Nimrods to “punish up the year’s sheep-stealing and calf-killing” by a hunt of these depredating outsiders; and, last evening, came the first trophy of the season, as a present to Idlewild. Our friend Hubbard, the ferryman, whose cottage, under the front cliff of the Storm-King, is the remotest human habitation towards lands unowned, sent us, with his compliments, a catamount “of the worst kind.” He measured four feet and two inches from fore-paw to hind-paw, weighed twelve and a half pounds, had a short thick tail, and ears sunken quite out of sight; and, what with extent of whiskers and possibility of jaw, looked altogether “well out of the way.”

The first wish of the children was to see what Bianca would think of even so faint a resemblance to herself. She was out, airing her manners and coquetting with my crumb-fed family of snow-birds in front of the house, but she was easily called in and trotted up to her ferocious looking relative in the corner. The proportions of the new comer had not been materially altered by his sudden death, and, spread out upon the hall floor in an attitude of repose, he

looked, to say the least, reasonably ready for social intercourse. She seemed to think so—walking straight up to him and commencing that rubbing promenade, to and fro, with which cats so enviously exchange electricity, on a new acquaintance.

It is curious that dumb animals seem to have no recognition of death. We had seen it in our bantam, Jake, who (as a former Home Journal has narrated) made love to his stuffed wife, three months after her decease, as believably as ever. And here was our favorite cat, a creature superior to most of her kind in common perception and intelligence, introduced to a dead wild-cat, and at once undertaking, by every manner of friendly nudge, rub and purr, to wake him from his slumber. His bloody skull and dead eyes wide open, told no story, for her. She evidently knew no difference between death and sleep. By the natural *instinct*, it thus appears, there is no recognition of it as a calamity.

But it was in a friendly and affectionate treatment of a country cousin, by one who had the usual grounds for being politely exclusive, that we saw the profitable lesson. The shorter tail, the coarser muzzle, the rougher hair and far less delicate complexion, made no difference to her. It was enough, apparently, that the stranger was of the same family; and not for all the accomplishments and belongings of a parlor cat, could the welcome have been more genial and complete. In a country where most people

have a cousin or two in the backwoods, the example of our superbly beautiful Miss Raventail is worth recording.

And, with this little bit of local news having got settled comfortably in our easy-chairs, we are ready (are we not, dear reader?) to commence in earnest the confidential gossip of which I spoke at starting.

To come at once to the point—there is a secret half told in the *Tribune* of a day or two ago, of which I have an irresistible inclination to tell you the rest! I could have kept the whole of it—a whole secret is so much easier to keep than half a one—but, with as much of it told as is now given to the world by the poet and author who is himself the subject of it, a remainder of some sort (in the way of a commentary or conjecture), is very sure to be added, and why should I not give you the true one? Biography at least will thank us, if we are not thanked before—though I am willing that this particular forgiveness of our little sin of communicativeness should come late. Long live Bayard!

Yes—it is about Bayard Taylor and *the way people love him*. He is now abroad, on one of his adventurous journeys to the north of Europe; and, in his last Letter, dated at Gotha, in Germany, he describes *a property of his own*, (speaking of it as “my German home,” “the home which German friendship has provided for me,” “my friend’s garden adjoins mine,” “the frontier of my domain,” etc., etc.)

the mystery of which, and there is a very natural and lively curiosity about it, just now) I shall solve by my proposed explanation. Let me first copy a part of the Letter giving the half of the secret which he is willing himself to tell :

“For the past fifteen days I have been quietly settled in my German home, dividing my time between excursions into the Thüringian forest, and the preparatory studies for the North. Gotha is one of the quietest towns in Germany, but it would be difficult to find a pleasanter one. It is built on the undulating table-land at the foot of the Thüringian hills, one thousand feet above the sea, whence its climate is rather cold for Germany, but very bracing and healthy. A tourist is an unusual sight here, and therefore one finds the old heartiness and simplicity of a German home-life in all its purity. As it is one of the court residences of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, there is a small, but intelligent and refined circle, some of the members of which have a European reputation in their departments of science and art. Hansen, the astronomer, and Dr. Peterman, the geographer, both of whom reside here, are also well known in America. Here came Barth, last summer, to recruit from his African travels ; and most of the explorers, of whose labors Perthes, the renowned map-publisher, makes such good use, may be seen here from time to time. Gerstäcker, Bodenstedt, the author of the ‘Thousand and One Days in the Orient,’ Gustav Freitag, Alexander Zeigler, and other German authors, hover about here through the summer ; and in the neighboring village of Friedrichsroda, the brothers Grimm sometimes make their abode.

"The home which German friendship has provided for me here, is in entire harmony with the character of the place. The little garden-house (inhabited only by Braisted and myself) fronts on the avenue of lindens leading into the town, while the rear overlooks a garden of three or four acres in extent. It was built by one of the Ministers of Duke Ernest II., in 1760, when the French style infected Germany, and the steep, bulging roof and quaint windows of the upper half-story faintly reminds one of the chateaux of the time of Louis XIV. The same taste characterizes the garden. The house stands on a gravelled terrace, bordered with flowers, whence a flight of stone steps guarded by statues of laughing fauns, descends to a second and broader terrace, in the centre of which is a spacious basin and a fountain better than that in the Park, for it plays day and night. Beyond this, a sloping arcade of the dwarf beech, trained so as to form a roof of shade, impervious to the sun, leads down to the garden. Still beyond, are flower beds open to the summer warmth, a pool edged with flags and lilies, and groups of trees studding the smooth sward on either side.

"An arch of vines at the end of the garden-walk ushers you into the grove, where a Pomona on her pedestal offers samples of fruits which you need not expect to find; for I have none other than forest trees here—fir, oak, ash, chestnut, and beech. You would not guess that the grove was so small. Its winding foot-paths are led through the thickest shade, and the briery undergrowth shoots up to shut out the patches of garden which shimmer through the lowest boughs. In the centre, under venerable firs, stands a hermitage of bark, beside a fountain of delicious water, which is surmounted by a triangular block of sand-stone, erected by an extinct mason who once possessed the

property. This mason had more money than learning ; he put up the stone as a monument to his ancestors, and inscribed thereon, as he supposed, ‘To my Venerable Fore-fathers,’ but, in fact, through his mis-spelling, ‘To my Venerable Trout.’ (*Forellen*, instead of *Vorältern*). Some one, however, has since then engraved on the three sides of the stone the following words of wisdom : ‘Forget not yesterday’—‘Enjoy to-day’—‘Think upon to-morrow?’

“ At the end of the grove, on the frontier of my domain, which is shut in by a hedge of fir trees, is ‘The Duke’s Tree,’ planted by the hand of Ernest II. Although nearly a hundred years old, the trunk is not more than a foot in diameter; but the tree is branching and shady, and throws its boughs over the rustic seat and stone table, whereupon my friend and I sometimes lie on our backs, and smoke the pipe of meditation. My friend’s garden adjoins mine, and there is no fence between us; so that I can walk from my hermitage directly into his stables, and inspect his thirty stall-fed cows, and his pens of high-born English swine. Beyond our joint territory, a rich banker has his garden, and his fountain (which, by the force of money, spouts ten feet higher than mine) is a pretty sight enough over the hedge which divides us. His garden terminates in an artificial mound, covered with tall pines and firs, which also has its historic interest. Here the Court of Gotha, aping the grand sentimental silliness of that of France, played at pastoral life; and lords and ladies, with satin ribbons on their crooks, and flowers in their hair, gave themselves such names as Corydon, and Doris, and Alexis, and Chloe, and tended sheep, and ate curds, and played flutes, and danced, and sang, and looked languishingly and amorously at each other; but always returned to beer and sausages, cards and scandal, every

evening. They even built a pastoral village of thirteen houses, which has long since disappeared, and instituted a Court of Love on the summit of the mound, where Phillis was tried for slighting the passion of Amyntor, or Florian for his faithlessness to Melissa. It is difficult, in our day, to imagine the possibility of such ineffable absurdities.

"My own room, under the steep French roof of the garden-house, was once the studio of a sculptor, to whose hand, I believe, I am indebted for the six thinly-clad statues which stand in my garden. The laughing fauns are jolly and good-humored enough, as they stand listening to the splash of the fountain: but Venus Anadyomene, down in the grove, leaves one to infer that the artist did not mingle in the most reputable society. So oddly are things managed in this place, that, although I live just between the palaces of the reigning Duke and the Dowager Duchess, both within a stone's throw, I hear the noises of the farm-yard every morning, and am, at this moment, listening to the measured beat of the flails on a threshing-floor across the way. The diligence to Coburg rattles past every afternoon, and the postillion blows me a merry hunting-song on his horn; sometimes wagons come in from the fields laden with turnips or potatoes, but other noises I rarely hear, and from my windows I see little except trees and garden-walks. The Duke is at present chamois-hunting in Tyrol, the theatre is not yet opened, and the only recent excitement has been the arrival of four hundred oysters from Ostend. They came one evening, and by noon the next day they were not.

"The Castle of Friedenstein, on the summit of the hill on which the town leans, is the old residence of the Dukes of Gotha, before the union of this Duchy with that of Coburg. It is a massive, imposing pile, forming three

sides of a quadrangle, open to the south, and looking across twelve miles of grain and turnip fields, to the waving blue line of the Thüringian Forest. A residence no more, it now contains a curious collection of pictures by the old German masters, a library of one hundred and eighty thousand volumes, an excellent museum of natural history, and one of the best collections of Chinese and Japanese articles out of Holland. The adjoining park is a noble piece of ground, just sufficiently neglected to make it delightful. A few footpaths meander through its groves of superb oak, fir and beech trees, and long, lazy pools of dark-green water furnish swimming room for some venerable swans. There is an island in the largest pool, in which lies one of the Dukes, who, at his own request, was buried there, in the moist earth, without shroud, coffin, or head-stone. The parks and gardens are open day and night to everybody, and I already feel as much right of possession therein as the oldest inhabitant.

“The *Jahrmarkt*, or annual Fair, was held here last week, and drew together crowds of the peasantry from the surrounding villages. The Fair itself was insignificant, compared with what I have seen in the larger German cities; but I found it interesting to watch the jolly peasants who hovered around the booths, and bought glaring handkerchiefs, immense pipes, winter caps, dreambooks, and ‘Rinaldo Rinaldini,’ or ‘The Four Sons of Haymon.’ They are a strong, sturdy, ruddy race—a little too purely animal, to be sure, but with a healthy stamina which is not often seen among our restless American people. The girls, in particular, are as fresh as wild roses, with teeth which can masticate tougher food than *blancmange*, and stomachs, I have no doubt, of equal digestive power. Their arms and ankles are too thick and strong, and their hands

too red and hard for our ideas of beauty, but they are exempt from a multitude of female weaknesses, and the human race is not deteriorated in their children. They are an ignorant, honest, simple-hearted race, and, although so industrious and economical, are generous, so far as their means allow them to be.

"Lately, the field-laborers on my friend's property commemorated the close of the season, by bringing him, according to custom, an *Erntekranz* (harvest-wreath) of ripe rye and barley-stalks, mixed with wild grasses, and adorned with fantastic strips of colored and gilded papers. This wreath was formally delivered to the landlord, who also, according to custom, regaled the laborers with plum cakes and wine. They passed the afternoon and evening in one of the outer rooms, settling their accounts and partaking of the cheer, after which a gittern was brought forth, and the room cleared for a dance. We had some of the old Thüringian songs, with a chorus more loud than musical, and two-step waltzes danced to the tinkling gittern. I was contented to be a listener and looker-on, but was soon seized by the strong hands of a tall, nut-brown maiden, and whirled into the ranks. Resistance was impossible, and at the end of five minutes I was glad to beat a giddy retreat."

And, now to share with you the running commentary which was marginal in my memory, as I read the foregoing.

It was a stormy night at Idlewild, somewhere about the middle of last June; and we were seated around the supper-table, with no guests, save the dark tips of the pines and hemlocks, lighted by the evening lamp and looking in at

the windows, when, by the rattle of wheels upon the gravel path through the wood, the children knew of an arrival. In another moment we were all happy with the sight of two for whom we keep slippers and name trees—"The Judge" who is lovingly spoken of, in our circle, by his official title alone, and with the definite article which precedes it pronounced always with an emphasis of affection, and his intimate ally and ours, Bayard Taylor—both come from the city for only a midnight visit and to be off before daylight the next morning. "His Honor's" Bench was to be occupied as usual at ten, and our friend the Traveller had come to say farewell—bound for Europe again on his projected Northern explorations, and to sail in the packet of the day after.

Supper renewed upon the table, and the youngest children kissed off to their pillows, we circled around the lamp once more, for our cheer and reciprocities. Bed-time was happily indefinite—the woods silent around us and the noisy city sixty miles away—and at the edge of the table-cloth the doors of our hearts stood open, like tents pitched around a camp-fire, and thoughts walked in and out at their untrammelled pleasure. There was much for every one present to look, and to say; but unseen spirits carried more freight between us—a great deal more—than passed by our eyes and voices. Our friend with his back to the Storm-King, however—the calm eyed one on the south

side of the table—was, of all our thoughts and sympathies, that night, the tacitly understood centre. He was bound to Lapland and Finland, to the icebergs of Northern Seas and the Steppes of Tartary, and, for a long, long time, and with many a danger in the way, he was to be absent from us.

I could find much, well worth giving you, of that night's conversation, if it were not keeping you from what you are impatient to know. It was varied and precious to remember. The hours went by like the wing-flappings of a seabird—effortless, and with scarce noticed succession, yet, with those even measurings, leaving so much behind! We talked of the countries he was first to visit—Switzerland and Germany more particularly—and then, with a stray remark of some one as to the chance friendships made in travel, and left like dreams incomplete, I saw a gleam pass over the face of Bayard. We had touched a memory, it was evident. But it was a struggle whether he would voice it or no—and it was not without the stammer of a modest hesitation and a slight flush of color to his honest eyes, that he let us, at last, into his secret.

A few words will tell what he has not, himself, now told of it in print. With a German gentleman, who had been his travelling companion in the East, he had formed one of these friendships of which we had been speaking—an inexplicable interchange of magnetic recognition and trust,

They were together in scenes far remote from both their homes; and their acquaintance, brief as it was, was yet knit by unusual associations and by a sympathy that had been reciprocally complete. They parted—each to return to his own land—but without promise of correspondence; and it was some time before Bayard heard from his German friend. The missive, when it came, was startling, however. It was a formal conveyance to him of an estate, to belong to him and to his heirs—a free gift, and given irreversibly, as a pledge and token of friendship. The description of it the reader has, above. The grounds were complete, the house furnished. But, that it should in no way be a burden to the new owner, the assurance was added, that as long as the giver should live (whose estate and residence were adjoining), it should be taken care of as if tenanted by Bayard in person—his, and in order, whenever he should come, and his, and in order, if he never came. He tells us now, in his letter to the *Tribune*, of his first occupancy of it—though, it is easy to see, it is with a reluctant pen; and it is apparent to me, also (after hearing his account of it, in the freer scope of conversation, that he has under-colored his description for print. It is a “German home,” all the value and beauty of which he sensitively hesitated to portray.

This is a romance; and Taylor’s whole life is a romance. He looks it, with his Arab physiognomy; his thin nostrils;

his calm, untroubled eye; his unsensual, but decided mouth; his simply noble manners and expression of face. He lives it in his course of daily life. He feels and inspires it. And (curiously enough) *his writings make the same impression as his personal presence.* Of which last inner and completing corroboration, by Nature, of the stamp she put upon his outer form, I have a proof still in store. Though hitherto a secret, it is too significant a fact\* in our friend's history to conceal from a Public that loves him—while, at the same time, it should be told in memory of a most liberal and high-hearted gentleman since dead.

Just ten years ago, soon after the publication of Bayard's first book, I received a letter from that prince among the Boston merchants, Colonel Thomas H. Perkins. He wrote to me as the journalist who had fortunately been the first to announce the rising of the new star—expressing the greatest interest in Taylor's character as seen through his writings, and inquiring very frankly into his prospects and present position. He apologized for the freedom of these queries by stating that he wished to make the offer, to this young writer, of whatever capital he might require for his start in life. I have no copy of Colonel Perkins' letter, and do not remember the precise terms of his proposal; but I chance to have preserved a copy of my reply, and, from it, may be gathered an idea of what it was, in substance. I thus wrote:

NEW YORK, *January 19, 1846.*

SIR : That your letter was one which should not be answered without some reflection, must be my apology for the delay of this reply. Always acquainted as I have been, with the unusual nobleness of your employment of wealth, the bringing home an instance of it to my personal influencing made me feel deeply the responsibility of aiding or diverting a stream so sacred. I am not prepared, even now, to give a decided opinion on this proposed benevolence. Taylor is as pure in his character as a child, and as full of endurance and energy and resource as more impetuous and antagonistic men. Nothing could corrupt him, and nothing could prevent his being prosperous—or so I think. He has gone to his native place, near Reading in Pennsylvania, and is engaged in editing the "Phœnixville Pioneer," a country newspaper which will give him a support. He wished to procure editorial employment in New York city, but I told him his mind was too well worth keeping separate to venture upon the subservient employment of sub-editing, and that he would better have a country paper all to himself than to merge his genius in another man's mind and purposes. He has followed this advice; but, whether a small capital, which would enable him to start for himself and use his first fresh energies in the larger sphere which he will ultimately fill, is advisable for him, you can better decide. I presume that he will never return to mechanical employment, except as a master-printer and editor—his pen is so much more profitable as well as more advantageous a reliance. But the possession of one or two thousand dollars would probably have induced him to start a paper, or purchase part of one, here in New York, or in Philadelphia or Boston. I will write •

to him, to-day, and find out what his plans and wishes are, and will write you the result. He is a very interesting man, as you discovered by his book. The only deficiency in his nature seems a singular absence of all the weaknesses and unruly passions common to men of his imaginative turn of mind. He has eyes more like an angel's than a human being's, and, though large, strong and healthy, is curiously gentle and retiring. His poetical genius is of a very high order, and, every way, I esteem him a man of most uncommon promise.

I express, believe me, sir, a feeling entertained for many years, when I assure you of the sincerest respect and honoring regard of.                   Your obedient servant,

N. P. WILLIS.

Col. Thomas H. Perkins.

The romance of this offer (which Taylor did not accept) forms with the other a beautiful exponent of the whole impression of the man—the one a tribute to his personal character, the other to the character of his mind. There is a unity between the two which it is the common drawback of genius to lack. Among poets, particularly, Bayard Taylor will be remembered as the rare exception of consistency and completeness. May God preserve him under the inclement skies to which he has now trusted himself, and bring him back to country and friends—to bless us with the noon and evening of a career, of which, as yet, we have seen but the energetic morning!

And so, dear reader, ends what you must allow is a gossip unusually confidential! I have had twenty turns of

thumb and finger to tear up what I have thus venturesomely written. Not for any scruple of my own, let me say, however. My experiment in literature (as you have probably long ago discovered) is to portray what is present and passing—to copy what is memorable, from my own seeing and knowing of famous events and persons—to pluck the ripe apple rather than wait for the dried fruit—to have the relish of eating fresh the fish which Biography, History and Fiction, are at such trouble to salt down. If I shall not, now, have offended my friend Bayard (which I trust, after his first blush at the world's better acquaintance with him, I shall prove not unpardonably to have done), it must be admitted that I have recorded what should rightly be known—rightly, that is to say, if Fame's rights to what is true of a famous man are at all to be measured by common Biography. And I will close by leaving a relish on your palate of what a better writer says upon the subject: "The best books are records of the writer's own experiences, of what he himself has seen or known, or, best of all, has done. The writing then becomes naturally concrete, perspicuous, a mirror of the fact; and, whether it be a book for the world and for ages, or for nations and generations, there is this common to them all, that they are genuine records of genuine things, and throw light on the subject."

\* \* \* \* \*

## L E T T E R   X X I I .

Previous Account by Friend Sands—Seeing with different Eyes—The raised Leg of Massachusetts—His laid-off Garter and Slippers—Fossil of an Eden Day—Buzzard's Bay Physiognomy—Wood's Hole—The Yacht Azalia—Edgartown, and its Head Man Dr. Fisher—Indian Shell-currency of the Island—Extract from an old Book about Nantucket—Quaker Character of Buildings and of Scenery—Contrast between Quaker and Indian Names—Indian Legend and its Poetry—Quaker superiorities—Early and easy Marriages—Whale Oil Agility and Grace of Gait, etc., etc.

NEW BEDFORD, *September 5.*

THERE is a foreshadowing of heaven (I am hopeful enough to believe) in the utterness, obstinate and instinctive, with which I forget what I have written. Away from home, today, and with no access to files of Home Journal, and memorandum-books, I am completely at a loss, for instance, whether or no a most interesting account of Nantucket, which I heard from our venerable and lamented neighbor at Idlewild, Friend Sands the Quaker, was ever made the subject of a letter. I know that I *told* you about it, somehow. What I have *communicated* I can remember; and his narrative of that visit was too graphic not to be shared with you; but it is the mortal inking—the tribute taken of pleasant thoughts by the curse of toil—which the instinct of heavenly memory refuses to store away. Though I

know, therefore, that the account of Friend Sands's visit to Nantucket has passed from me to you—did or did not my inkstand black its footprints as it went?

But, with this embarrassment for my apology, perhaps you will excuse a little possible repetition; for I have now been to Nantucket, myself, and should describe my visit more comfortably if I had never written of it before—as possibly I have not. At all events, there was a novelty in seeing, through my own every-day eyes, what I had seen, before, only through eyes as angel-visioned as those of that sweet, good old man—eyes that were life-unclouded and heaven-ready so long before he died. To proceed, then, with my history of how Nantucket looked, yesterday, to a common sinner's every-day eyes.

The motto of Massachusetts would probably be guessed at, by the school-boy, as "To horse! To horse!"—if he were called upon suddenly to give it, and trusted to his impression from its picture on the map—for it looks as if the old State had its leg in the air with hauling on its horseman's boot—(Cape Cod the lifted toe and Monomoy sand-bar the upturned spur)—while under the hamstrings, at Buzzard's Bay, lie the cast-off slippers, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. And to these secluded islands (which preserved their character of *slippers* by remaining at peace while the booted and spurred mainland fought the King Philip war), it is the custom for the Buzzard's-

Bay steamers to make "pleasure excursions" during the summer. And it was on one of these, advertised by the "Eagle's Wing" for September the first, that our party proposed to go.

It chanced to be a morning altogether Adam-and-Eve-worthy—one of those fossils of Eden-weather which occasionally turn up with the plough of a summer's day—and we joyfully made our way through the wilderness of whale-ships at New Bedford wharves, to the gaily-painted little steamer ringing her welcome among the tall masts. With her decks laden with some four hundred passengers, the "Eagle's Wing" cast loose at eleven A.M. and put out from Acushnet River—"Wood's Hole," some fifteen miles across Buzzard's Bay, being our first point of destination. As the shore lessened, of course, I varied my study of the somewhat unwritten sea with attention to the more plummetable "soundings" of my fellow-passengers. They were from a corner of New England, the population of which, as you know, are so "awful smart" that they never have stuff to look anything else with; and I must say that their physiognomy as a crowd would be improved with here and there a countenance of some little suavity of dullness. Still, there were the two usual classes—those who were handsomer than they knew of, and those who thought themselves handsomer than they were—and among the former were some well bronzed and bearded young whale-

men, just home from the three-years' voyage ; and among the latter were their sweethearts "and the other girls," all "perfectly beautiful," of course, under the sharp appetite for female beauty given by a long fasting on whales and porpoises.

We ran to the small harbor of Wood's Hole in about an hour ; and, this being the unfastened clasp of that laid-off garter of the leg of Massachusetts called the "Elizabeth Islands," it is the gap and channel by which to get from Buzzard's Bay to the Atlantic without making the circuit of that chain of islands. It is also the steamer's landing-place for those bound to Naushon, the largest of them ; and, for a very charming lady who was among our passengers, the beautiful yacht "Azalia" lay anchored and waiting, she being the Cleopatra-served queen of that island, her husband's residence. The disembarking of this one passenger, and of several baskets of marketing which were doubtless tributary also to her well served loveliness, seemed to be our main errand at that port ; and, this achieved, we kept on our way to Martha's Vineyard. And, in fifteen or twenty minutes we ran under the shelter of Chappequiddick, the small island which seems to have been thrown out by Nature as a breakwater against the Atlantic, giving shelter and safe anchorage in all weather to the harbor of Edgartown.

The main wharf of Edgartown (the metropolis of the

twenty-mile island called Martha's Vineyard), was crowded with a large representation of its two thousand inhabitants—the straw-hatted and parasoled curiosity which had brought down the male and female islanders to see the voyagers from the distant mainland, making a very brilliant show, among the whale-ships and oil-casks of the pier. We had half an hour for a walk; and, immediately on landing, we fortunately fell in with the head Sachem of the island, with whom my companion, Mr. Grinnell, chanced to be acquainted; and under whose favorable convoy we made the circuit of the principal streets. This gentleman, Dr. Fisher, is the tallest, strongest-built, healthiest and handsomest, as well as the wealthiest and most influential inhabitant of Martha's Vineyard. He is certainly a monarch to look at, and he carried the sceptre of the island in his pocket—(the key of the "Martha's Vineyard Bank," of which he is President)—giving us, by this means, the privilege of an entrance into his palace after "banking hours" were over, and a view of the iron safes where were deposited the precious ledgers which are the jewels of his crown. He did not (by the way) show us a specimen of what I was curious to see, the "strings of forty sun-dried clams," which, in the primitive Indian currency of the island, were equivalent to a copper. This, and the weed called *horse-feet* or *sea-spin* (two hundred of which, for manure, constituted the yearly tithe

paid by each master of a family for the support of the clergyman) were my hurried omissions in that half-hour of sight-seeing.

And, by the way, it is in curious contrast with our present dazzling returns from California, to look back to the representatives of coin, and the slow and homely *creation of values* in this once newly discovered corner of the world. There are some excellent comments on those of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, in an old book I have stumbled upon, called "Letters from an American Farmer to a friend in England," published in Philadelphia, in 1793. The author discourses thus sensibly:

"It would be a task worth a speculative genius, to enter intimately into the situation and characters of the people, from Nova Scotia to Florida. Numberless settlements, each distinguished by some peculiarities, present themselves on every side; all seem to realize the most sanguine wishes that a good man could form for the happiness of his race. Here, they live by fishing on the most plentiful coasts of the world; there they fell trees, by the sides of large rivers, for masts and lumber; here others convert innumerable logs into the best boards; there, again, others cultivate the land, rear cattle and clear large fields. Yet I have a spot in my view (Nantucket) where none of these operations are performed, which will reward us for the trouble of inspection; but, though it is barren in its soil, insignificant in its extent, inconvenient in its situation, deprived of materials for building, it seems to have been inhabited merely to prove what mankind can do, when happily governed. And

when we find barren spots fertilized ; grass growing where none grew before ; grain gathered from fields which had hitherto produced nothing but brambles ; dwellings raised where no building-materials were to be found ; wealth acquired by the most uncommon means ; then willingly do we leave the odoriferous furrow, or the rich valley, with pleasure repairing to the spot where so many difficulties have been overcome ; where extraordinary exertions have produced extraordinary effects, and where every natural obstacle has been removed by a vigorous industry. . . . .

"Would you believe that a sandy spot of about twenty-three thousand acres, affording neither stones nor timber, meadows nor arable land, can yet boast of a handsome town consisting of more than five hundred houses, should possess above two hundred sail of vessels, constantly employ upwards of two thousand seamen, feed more than fifteen thousand sheep, five hundred cows, two hundred horses ; and has several citizens (this was in 1798) worth twenty-thousand pounds sterling ? Yet all these facts are uncontroverted.

"This island was patented in 1671, by twenty-seven proprietors. They found it so universally barren and so unfit for cultivation that they mutually agreed not to divide it, as each could neither live on, nor improve, that lot which might fall to his share. They then *cast their eyes on the sea*, and finding themselves obliged to become fishermen, they looked for a harbor ; and, having found one, they determined to build a town in its neighborhood and to dwell together. For that purpose they surveyed as much ground as would afford to each what is generally called here a *home-lot*. Forty acres were thought sufficient to answer this double purpose ; for, to what end should they covet more land than they could improve, or even inclose ?

*not being possessed of a single tree in the whole extent of their dominion.* This was all the territorial property they allotted ; the rest they agreed to *hold in common* ; and, seeing that the scanty grass of the island might feed sheep, they agreed that each proprietor should be entitled to feed on it, if he pleased, five hundred and sixty sheep. By this agreement the *public flock* was to consist of fifteen thousand, one hundred and twenty ; that is, the undivided part of the island, was, by such means, *ideally divisible* into as many parts or shares, to which, nevertheless, no determinate quantity of land was affixed.

“ Further, they agreed, in case the grass should grow better by feeding, that, then, *four sheep should represent a cow, and two cows a horse.* Several hundred of *sheep-pasture titles* have since been divided on those different tracts which are now cultivated ; the rest by inheritance and intermarriages have been so subdivided, that it is very common for *a girl to have no other portion than her outfit and four sheep-pastures or the privilege of feeding a cow.* But as this privilege is founded on an ideal, though real title to some unknown piece of land, which, one day or another, may be ascertained, these people very unwillingly sell those small rights, and esteem them more than you would imagine. They are the representation of a future freehold ; they cherish in the mind of the possessor, a latent though distant hope, that, by his *success in the next whale season*, he may be enabled to pitch on some predilected spot, and *there build himself a home.*

· · · · “ There is a considerable tract of even ground, the best on the island, divided into *seven fields*, one of which is planted by that part of the community which is entitled to it. This is called the *common plantation*, a simple but useful expedient ; for, was each holder of this tract

to fence his property, it would require a prodigious quantity of posts and rails, which, you must remember, are to be purchased and fetched from the mainland. Instead of those private subdivisions, each man's allotment of land is thrown into the general field, which is fenced at the expense of the parties. Within it, every one does with his own proportion of the ground what he pleases. This *apparent community* saves a very material expense, a great deal of labor, and, perhaps, raises *a sort of emulation among them*, which urges every one to fertilize his share with the greatest care and attention. Thus, every seven years the whole of this tract is under cultivation, and, enriched by manure and ploughing, yields afterwards excellent pasture; to which the *town cows*, amounting to five hundred, are daily led by the *town shepherd*, and as regularly driven back in the evening. There, *each animal easily finds the house to which it belongs*, where they are sure to be rewarded for the milk they give, by a present of bran, grain, or other farinaceous preparation. These are commonly called *Tetoukemah lots*.

"The rest of the undescribed part of the island is open, and serves as a *common pasture for their sheep*. To the west of the island, in the spring, their young cattle are driven to feed. It has a few oak bushes, and two fresh-water ponds, abounding with *teals, brandts*, and other *sea-fowls*, brought by the proximity to their sand-banks and shallows. Here, they have *neither wolves nor foxes*; those inhabitants, therefore, who live out of town, *raise with all security as much poultry as they want*, and their turkeys are very large and excellent."

It is curious to look around in Edgartown, and see how all prevalent, in its streets, structures and scenery, is the

spirit, type and essence of Quakerism. The buildings--the very simplest structures that could shut in families and shut out rain--stand at all manner of angles to the street, having quite the air of being dropped from the clouds like a cluster of blocks and left where they first fell. The island itself, indeed, a sand-bank without verdure or foliage, seems to have been created a Quaker (a Friend *Sands*) by Nature—with all its purity of air and invigorating healthfulness of temperature, rigidly unornamented by leaf or flower. To tell the truth, I looked with some astonishment at the personal beauty of our friend the King-Fisher —(the monarch of the island, who was showing us the new-built Bank that formed his throne)—and it was a handsomeness in spite of evident intention to the contrary. Though not in the Quaker costume, his ample proportions were clad wholly with a view to comfort—large thick shoes, ample and square tailed blue coat, loose-tied cravat, slouch hat, and prairie-proportioned trowsers—all in keeping with his huge plain manners and right down words.

Yet—*apropos* of Quaker words—look at the poetry that has once inhabited these islands in the shape of the Indian names, histories and legends. Compare the spots which the Quakers have had the naming of—(*Further Creek, Hither Creek, Narrow Creek, Broad Creek, Muddy Cove, Sandy Cove, Thumb Cove, Great Thumb Cove, Squash Meadow and Eel Point*)—with the red man's names which

have still lingered :—*Tashmu* Spring, *Toochka* Pond, *Sasacueh* and *Siusconset*, *Nobadzeer* and *Madequeechan* Ponds, *Nashaquitsa* and *Chapaquonsett*. And, what a contrast between the Quaker history of these islands—simple statistics of industry and long life—and such legends as the Indian account of the Devil's Den, a volcanic crater at the southwest end of Martha's Vineyard :

" Many years before the English came to this island, a giant, named Maushope, resided in this hollow. Here he broiled whales, and, not consuming all himself, he supplied the Indians with fish ready-cooked. To facilitate the catching of these fish, he threw many large stones at proper distances into the sea, on which he might walk with greater ease to himself. (This cause-way is now called the Devil's bridge.) On a time an offering was made to him of all the tobacco on Martha's Vineyard ; which, having smoked, he *knocked the snuff out of his pipe, which formed Nantucket*. When the Christian religion took place in the island, he told them, as light had come among them, and he belonged to the Kingdom of Darkness, he must take his leave. Accordingly, after metamorphosing his children into fishes, and throwing his wife on Saconet Point, where she still remains a misshapen rock, he went away, nobody knew whither."

Poetry notwithstanding, however, the balance to be struck, in weighing the merits of these islands, is altogether in their Quaker favor. And I should not leave this part of the subject without mentioning that there are two import-

ant points on which their climate and soil have an advantage over the rest of the world, viz.—*matrimony* and *pumpkins*. The old writer from whom I have already quoted says :

“The climate is so favorable to population that *marriage* is the object of every man’s earliest wish ; and it is a blessing so easily obtained that great numbers are obliged to quit their native land and carry their children to other countries for a subsistence.”

And the other—the *pumpkin* superiority—is well known to naturalists. A root transplanted from the mainland to any of these islands will produce gradually a sweeter fruit, till the juice is almost of the character of molasses. The pumpkin pies made here, though of a peculiarly delicious flavor, are wholly without other sweetening than the fruit itself.

Turning back to the old volume at my elbow, I find still two other passages which have a bearing on the advantages of these islands :

“Every man here takes a wife *as soon as he chooses*, and that is generally very early. *No portion is required, none is expected.*”

“A man born here is distinguishable, *by his gait*, from among a hundred other men, so remarkable are they for a *pliability of sinews* and a *peculiar agility* which attends them even in old age. I have heard some persons attri-

bute this to *the effects of whale oil*, with which they are so copiously anointed in the various operations it must undergo before it is fit either for the European market or the candle manufactory."

You see, my dear Morris, that the subject grows under my hand. My letter has already passed the usual length, and we are not yet even arrived at Nantucket. I will stop for the present, and my next letter shall proceed with the two days' visit to that most interesting island.

Yours always,

## L E T T E R   X X I I .

Gay Reception at Edgartown—Happy Exemption from the usual Penalty of the Voyage—Picnic Refreshment on the Voyage—Universal Temperance—Original Price of the Island of Nantucket—Quaker Exemptions from Common social Evils—Curious Chapter from an Old Book, about the “Friends” of Nantucket, and their Manners and Customs—Specimen of the First-born Poetry of the Island, etc. etc.

NEW BEDFORD, *September.*

WITH the close of my last letter, I believe, we had got as far as Martha’s Vineyard, on our way to Nantucket. Our welcome at Edgartown (I forgot to mention) was a display of some twenty flags by a revenue-cutter lying in the harbor, and of one or more flags by most of the other vessels at the wharves—a public sympathy with a “pleasure excursion,” which spoke well for the tender sensibilities of the island. There was also a salute of two guns fired by the government vessel, the Revenue-Commodore, in his uniform, standing on the quarter-deck; and to this we responded by several sharp sneezes from our steam-whistle, while an Italian music-grinder who chanced to be on board played vigorously at the bowsprit. Our four hundred passengers, as a body, were under the exhilaration of an agreeable disappointment; many having secretly

dreaded that the breakfast, eaten at New Bedford, would be

“Though lost to sight to memory dear.”

and I, for one, having stopped at the apothecary's on my way to the boat, and laid in that deferrer of sea-sickness, (for nothing on earth will ultimately prevent it), a bottle of the essence of ginger. Few go to Nantucket, I believe, ordinarily, without paying, to the Atlantic, this eructatory toll. It is even mentioned in a mineralogical report made to the Academy of Science in 1786—the learned Dr. Baylies, who then, with a committee, made a special voyage to the island, to examine its soil and strata, declaring to that scientific body: “With the constant rolling of the boat I grew exceedingly sick; and nothing could alleviate my disagreeable feelings but a view of Gay's Head, seen through Quick's Hole at a distance of about fifteen miles.” So, of course, not being called upon to rely upon a view through “Quick's Hole” for an “alleviation of *our* disagreeable feelings,” we were all happier than Dr. Baylies.

We bade adieu to the crowded wharf at Edgartown, about one o'clock; and the next hour of our voyage (to the remoter island of Nantucket) was occupied by most of the small parties on board in such refreshment as bag or basket could supply. Unlike most excursions of the kind, it was on the plan of auto-provender—eaten from such laps and fingers as Nature and friendship could supply—and

there was another difference from the pleasure-parties on our Hudson River; not a drop of stimulating liquor to be seen, either for sale at a “bar,” in the boat, or as a part of private lunch! Temperance prevails, without a doubt, in the navigation of Buzzard’s Bay.

We now began to approach that famous island, which, though fourteen miles long and three broad, was bought of Thomas Mayhew (its first English possessor after Lord Sterling), for the small consideration of *thirty pounds and two beaver hats*—in the words of the deed: “the aforesaid to enjoy, and their heirs and assigns forever (Nantucket) with all the privileges thereunto belonging, for and in consideration of the sum of thirty pounds of current pay, *and also, two beaver hats, one for myself and one for my wife.*” As there were thirty thousand acres of land, this amounted, of course, to one thousand acres and two-thirtieths of beaver hats, for a single pound sterling! We looked in vain, around the walls of the Nantucket Athénæum, the next day, for any portraits of “Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew” in their two “beaver hats”—and I may express my surprise, by the way, at the general dearth of antiquities and memorials on the island. Tombstones, I know, are against the principles of the Quakers, but does that feeling extend to a general discouragement of historical mementoes?

This last-mentioned superfluity (a tombstone) is one of

a curious list of things which (it is recorded) the Quakers of Nantucket *found they could do without*. In the old book from which I have already quoted (published in 1798), it is stated that there had not been a capital punishment, or trial for any capital offence, on the island, for over a hundred years. And—but I will quote the passage or two enumerating their exemptions:

“There are but two congregations in Sherburn, (the capital of Nantucket). They assemble every Sunday in meeting-houses, as simple as the dwellings of the people; and there is *but one clergyman on the island* (population about four thousand). But one single priest to instruct a whole island and to direct their consciences! It is even so. This lonely clergyman is a Presbyterian minister, who has a very large and respectable congregation; the other is composed of Quakers, who, you know, *admit of no particular person who, in consequence of being ordained, becomes entitled to preach, catechise, and receive salary for his trouble*. And these two sects live in perfect harmony with each other.”

.... “Singular as it may appear to you, there are *but two medical men* on the island; for, of what service can physic be, in a primitive society, where the excesses of inebriation are so rare?”

.... “*One single lawyer* has, of late years, found means to live here; but his best fortune proceeds more from having married one of the wealthiest heiresses of the island. He is sometimes employed in recovering money lent on the mainland.”

.... “Here, happily, unoppressed with any civil bondage, this society of fishermen and merchants live, *without any military establishments, without governors; or*

*any masters but the laws ; and their civil code is so light that it is never felt."*

. . . . "The same simplicity attends the worship they pay to the Divinity. Their *elders are the only teachers* of their congregations, the instructors of their youth. They visit and comfort the sick. After death *the society bury them* with their fathers, *without pomp, prayers or ceremonies.* *Not a stone or monument is erected,* to tell where any person was buried ; their memory is preserved by tradition."

The temptation to copy a whole chapter of this curious book is too great to be resisted. It is little known, and, as it gives a graphic picture of what Nantucket was in the last century, it will better prepare you for my own description of it, as I found it now. I will suppose, therefore, that, while we are sailing over the twenty or thirty miles of smooth sea between Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, you are reading as follows :

"The manners of the 'Friends' are entirely founded on that simplicity which is their boast, and their most distinguished characteristic ; and those manners have acquired the authority of laws. Here they are strongly attached to plainness of dress, as well as to that of language ; insomuch that, though some part of it may be ungrammatical, yet should any person who was born and brought up here attempt to speak more correctly, he would be looked upon as a fop, or an innovator. On the other hand, should a stranger come here, and adopt their idiom in all its purity, (as they deem it), this accomplishment would immediately

procure him the most cordial reception, and they would cherish him like an ancient member of their society. So many impositions have they suffered on this account, that they begin, now, indeed, to grow more cautious. They are so tenacious of their ancient habits of industry and frugality, that if any of them were to be seen with a long coat made of English cloth, on any other than the *first day* (Sunday) he would be greatly ridiculed and censured; he would be looked upon as a careless spendthrift, whom it would be unsafe to trust, and in vain to relieve.

"A few years ago, two *single horse chairs* were imported from Boston, to the great offence of these prudent citizens; nothing appeared to them more culpable than the use of such gaudy painted vehicles, in contempt of the more useful and more simple *single-horse carts* of their fathers. This piece of extravagant and unknown luxury almost caused a schism, and set every tongue agoing. Some predicted the approaching ruin of those families that had imported them; others feared the dangers of example. Never, since the foundation of the town, had there happened anything which so much alarmed this primitive community. One of the possessors of these profane chairs, filled with repentance, wisely sent it back to the continent; the other, more obstinate and perverse, in defiance to all remonstrances, persisted in the use of his chair, until, by degrees, they became reconciled to it; though I observe that the wealthiest and most respectable people still go to meeting, or to their farms, in a *single-horse cart*, with a decent awning fixed over it. Indeed, if you consider their sandy soil, and the badness of the roads, these appear to be the best contrived vehicles for this island.

"*Idleness is the most heinous sin that can be committed in Nantucket.* An idle man would soon be pointed out at

an object of compassion; for idleness is considered as another word for want and hunger. This principle is so thoroughly understood, and is become so universal, so prevailing a prejudice, that, literally speaking, they are never idle. Even if they go to the market-place, which is (if I may be allowed the expression) the coffee-house of the town, either to transact business, or to converse with their friends, *they always have a piece of cedar in their hands* and while they are talking, they will, as it were instinctively, *employ themselves in converting it into something useful*, either in making bungs or spoyls for their oil-casks, or other useful articles. I must confess that I have never seen more ingenuity in the use of the knife: thus the most idle moments of their lives become usefully employed. In the many hours of leisure which their long cruises afford them, they cut and carve a variety of boxes and pretty toys, in wood, adapted to different uses, which they bring home as testimonials of remembrance to their wives or sweethearts. They have showed me a variety of little bowls, and other implements, executed cooper-wise, with the greatest neatness and elegance. You will be pleased to remember *they are all brought up to the trade of coopers*, be their future intentions or fortunes what they may; therefore, almost *every man in this island has always two knives in his pocket*—one much larger than the other: and though they hold everything that is called *fashion* in the utmost contempt, yet they are as difficult to please, and as extravagant in the choice and price of their knives, as any young buck in Boston would be about his hat, his buckles, or coat. As soon as a knife is impaired, or superseded by a more convenient one, it is carefully laid up in some corner of their desk. I once saw upwards of fifty thus preserved, at Mr. ——'s, one of the worthiest men on this island,

and among the whole, there was not one that perfectly resembled another.

"As the sea excursions are often very long, *their wives*, in their absence, are necessarily *obliged to transact business*, to settle accounts, and, in short, to rule and provide for their families. These circumstances, being often repeated, give women the abilities as well as a taste for that kind of superintendency, to which, by their prudence and good management, they seem to be, in general, very equal. This employment ripens their judgment, and justly entitles them to a rank *superior to that of other wives*; and this is the principal reason why those of Nantucket, as well as those of Montreal,\* are so fond of society, so affable, and so conversant with the affairs of the world. The men, at their return—weary with the fatigue of the sea, and full of confidence and love—cheerfully give their consent to every transaction that has happened during their absence, and all is joy and peace. '*Wife, thee hast done well*,' is the general approbation they receive for their application and industry. What would the men do without the agency of these faithful mates? The absence of so many of them at particular seasons, leaves the town quite desolate; and this mournful situation disposes the women to *go to each other's houses much oftener* than when their husbands were at home: hence the *custom of incessant visiting* has infected every one, and even those whose husbands do not go abroad. The house is always clean before they set out, and with peculiar alacrity they pursue their intended visit, which consists of a social chat, a dish of tea and a hearty supper. When the good man of the house returns from

\* Most of the merchants and young men of Montreal spend the greatest part of their time in trading with the Indians, at an amazing distance from Canada; and it often happens that they are three years together absent from home.

his labor, he peaceably goes after his wife, and brings her home ; meanwhile, the young fellows, equally vigilant, easily find out which is the most convenient house, and there they assemble with *the girls* of the neighborhood. Instead of cards, musical instruments, or songs, they relate stories of their whaling voyages, their various sea adventures, and talk of the different coasts and people they have visited. ‘The Island of Catherine, in the Brazils,’ says one, ‘is a very droll island—it is inhabited by none but men ; women are not permitted to come in sight of it ; not a woman is there on the whole island. Who among us is not glad it is not so here ? The Nantucket girls and boys beat the world.’ At this innocent sally, the titter goes round ; they whisper to one another their spontaneous reflections. Puddings, pies, and custards never fail to be produced on such occasions ; for I believe there never were any people in their circumstances who lived so well, even to superabundance. As *inebriation is unknown*, and music, singing, and dancing are held in equal detestation, they never could fill all the vacant hours of their lives without the repast of the table. Thus these young people sit and talk, and divert themselves as well as they can ; if any one has lately returned from a cruise, he is generally the speaker of the night ; they often all laugh and talk together ; but they are happy, and would not exchange their pleasures for those of the most brilliant assemblies in Europe. This lasts until the father and mother return, when all retire to their respective homes—the men reconducting the partners of their affections.

“Thus they spend many of the youthful evenings of their lives ; *no wonder, therefore, that they marry so early.* But no sooner have they undergone this ceremony, than they cease to appear so cheerful and gay ; the new rank

they hold in the society impresses them with more serious ideas than were entertained before. The title of master of a family necessarily requires more solid behavior and deportment. The new wife follows in the trammels of custom, which are as powerful as the tyranny of fashion ; she gradually advises and directs. The new husband soon goes to sea ; he leaves her to learn and exercise the new government in which she is entered. Those who stay at home are full as passive, in general at least, with regard to the inferior departments of the family. But you must not imagine, from this account, that the Nantucket wives are turbulent, of high temper, and difficult to be ruled ; on the contrary, the wives of Sherburn, in so doing, comply only with the prevailing custom of the island. The husbands, equally submissive to the ancient and respectable manners of their country, submit, without ever suspecting that there can be any impropriety. Were they to behave otherwise, they would be afraid of subverting the principles of their society by altering its ancient rules. Thus both parties are perfectly satisfied, and all is peace and concord.

“The richest person now in the island *owes all his present prosperity and success, to the ingenuity of his wife.* This is a known fact, which is well recorded ; for while he was performing his first cruises, she traded with pins and needles, and kept a school. Afterwards, she purchased more considerable articles, which she sold with so much judgment that she laid the foundation of a system of business, which she has ever since prosecuted with equal dexterity and success. She wrote to London, formed connections, and, in short, became the only ostensible instrument of that house, both at home and abroad. Who is he in this country, and who is a citizen of Nantucket or Boston, who does not know *Aunt Kesiah*? I must tell you that

she is the wife of Mr. C——n, a very respectable man who, well pleased with all her schemes, trusts to her judgment, and relies on her sagacity, with so entire a confidence as to be altogether passive as to the concerns of his family. They have the best country-seat on the island, at Quayes, where they live with hospitality, and in perfect union. He seems to be altogether the contemplative man.

"To this dexterity in managing the husband's business while he is absent, *the Nantucket wives unite a great deal of industry.* They spin, or cause to be spun, in their houses, abundance of wool and flax, and would be forever disgraced, and looked upon as idlers, if all the family were not clad in good, neat, and sufficient homespun cloth. *First days* are the only seasons when it is lawful for both sexes to exhibit some garments of English manufacture; even *these* are of the most moderate price, and of the gravest colors. There is no kind of difference in their dress; they are all clad alike, and resemble, in that respect, the members of one family.

"A singular custom prevails here, among the women, at which I was greatly surprised, and am really at a loss how to account for the original cause that has introduced in this primitive society so remarkable a fashion, or rather so extraordinary a want. They have adopted these many years, the *Asiatic custom of taking a dose of opium every morning;* and so deeply rooted is it, that they would be at a loss how to live without this indulgence; they would rather be deprived of any necessary than forego their favorite luxury. This is *much more prevailing among the women than the men*—few of the latter having caught the contagion; though the sheriff, whom I may call the first person in the island, who is an eminent physician beside, and whom I had the pleasure of being well acquainted with,

has, for many years, submitted to this custom. He takes three grains of it every day, after breakfast, without the effects of which, he often told me, he was not able to transact any business.

"It is hard to conceive how a people always happy and healthy, in consequence of the exercise and labor they undergo, never oppressed with the vapor of idleness, yet should want the factitious effects of opium to preserve that cheerfulness to which their temperance, their climate, their happy situation, so justly entitle them. But where is the society perfectly free from error or folly? The least imperfect is undoubtedly that where the greatest good preponderates; and, agreeable to this rule, I can truly say that I never was acquainted with a less vicious, or a more harmless one.

"The majority of the present inhabitants are the descendants of the twenty-seven first proprietors, who patented the island: of the rest, many others have since come over among them, chiefly from the Massachusetts. Here are neither Scotch, Irish, nor French, as is the case in most other settlements; they are an unmixed English breed. The consequence of this extended connection is, that they are all in some degree related to each other. You must not be surprised, therefore, when I tell you that they *always call each other cousin, uncle, or aunt*, which are become such common appellations that no other are made use of in their daily intercourse. You would be deemed stiff and affected, were you to refuse conforming yourself to this ancient custom, which truly depicts the image of a large family. The many who reside here that have not the least claim of relationship with any one in the town, yet by the power of custom make use of no other address in their conversation. Were you here yourself but a few

days, you would be obliged to adopt the same phraseology, which is *far from being disagreeable, as it implies a general acquaintance and friendship*, which connects them all in unity and peace.

"Their taste for fishing has been so prevailing that it has engrossed all their attention, and even prevented them from introducing some higher degree of perfection in their agriculture. There are many useful improvements which might have meliorated their soil. There are many trees which, if transplanted here, would have thriven extremely well, and would have served to shelter, as well as decorate, the favorite spots they have so carefully manured. The red cedar, the locust, the button-wood, I am persuaded, would have grown here rapidly and to great size, with many others; but their thoughts are turned altogether toward the sea. The Indian corn begins to yield them considerable crops; and the wheat sown on its stocks is become a very profitable grain. Rye will grow with little care. They might raise, if they would, immense quantities of buckwheat.

"Such an island, inhabited as I have described, is not the place where gay travellers should resort, in order to enjoy that variety of pleasures the more splendid towns of this continent afford. Not that they are wholly deprived of what we might call recreations and innocent pastimes; but opulence, instead of luxuries and extravagances, produces nothing more, here, than an increase of business, an additional degree of hospitality, greater neatness in the preparation of dishes, and better wines. They often walk and converse with each other, as I have observed before; and upon extraordinary occasions will *take a ride to Palpus*, where there is a house of entertainment; but these rural amusements are conducted upon the same plan of

moderation as those in town. They are so simple as hardly to be described. The pleasure of going and returning together, of chatting and walking about, of throwing the bar, heaving stones, etc., are the only entertainments they are acquainted with. This is all they practise, and all they seem to desire.

"The house at Palpus is the general resort of those who possess the *luxury of a horse and chaise*, as well as those who still retain, as the majority do, a predilection for their primitive vehicle. By resorting to that place, they enjoy a change of air, they taste the pleasures of exercise: perhaps an exhilarating bowl, not at all improper in this climate, affords the chief indulgence known to these people on the days of their greatest festivity. *The mounting a horse must afford a most pleasing exercise to those men who are so much at sea.* I was once invited to that house, and had the satisfaction of conducting thither one of the many beauties of that island (for it abounds with handsome women), dressed in all the bewitching attire of the most charming simplicity. Like the rest of the company, she was cheerful without loud laughs, and smiling, without affectation. They all appeared gay, without levity. I had never before in my life seen so much unaffected mirth mixed with so much modesty. The pleasures of the day were enjoyed with the greatest liveliness and the most innocent freedom—no disgusting pruderies, no coquettish airs, tarnished this enlivening assembly; they behaved according to their native dispositions, the only rules of decorum with which they were acquainted. What would an European visitor have done here without a fiddle, without a dance, without cards? He would have called it an insipid assembly, and ranked this among the dullest days he had ever spent. This rural excursion had a very great affinity

to those practised in our province, with this difference only, that we have no objection to the sportive dance, though conducted by the rough accents of some self-taught African fiddler. We returned as happy as we went; and the brightness of the moon kindly lengthened a day which had passed, like other agreeable ones, with singular rapidity.

"Learned travellers, returned from seeing the paintings and antiquities of Rome and Italy, still filled with the admiration and reverence they inspire, would have hardly been persuaded that so contemptible a spot, which contains nothing remarkable but the genius and the industry of its inhabitants, could ever be an object worthy attention. But I, having never seen the beauties which Europe contains, cheerfully satisfy myself with attentively examining what my native country exhibits. If we have neither ancient amphitheatres, gilded palaces, nor elevated spires—we enjoy, in our woods, a substantial happiness, which the wonders of art cannot communicate. None among us suffer oppression, either from government or religion: there are very few poor, except the idle; and, fortunately, the force of example, and the most ample encouragement, soon create a new principle of activity, which had been extinguished, perhaps, in their native country, for want of those opportunities which so often compel honest Europeans to seek shelter among us. The means of procuring subsistence in Europe are limited; the army may be full, the navy may abound with seamen, the land, perhaps, wants no additional laborers, the manufacturer is overcharged with supernumerary hands; what, then, must become of the unemployed? Here, on the contrary, human industry has acquired a boundless field to exert itself in—a field which will not be fully cultivated in many ages!"

With this charming budget of information, I have so far extended my letter, that I must defer, till another week, the entering fairly upon my travels in Nantucket. If your ignorance was at all measurable by my own, you will thank me for the manner in which I have first taken pains to look up authorities and instruct you as to the island's history and statistics. But, to make sure of your sympathies, I will add still another piece of information—*Nantucket has produced a poet!* The following verses are extracted from a production called “A Looking-glass for the Times,” written in 1676, by Peter Folger, a citizen of Sherborne, the capital of the Island.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ New England for these many years  
Hath had both rest and peace,  
But now the case is otherwise;  
Our troubles do increase.  
The plague of war is now begun  
In some great colonies,  
And many towns are desolate  
We may see with our eyes.  
The loss of many goodly men  
We may lament also,  
Who in the war have lost their lives  
And fallen by our foe.  
Our women also they have took,  
And children very small,  
Great cruelty they have used  
To some, though not to all.

\* \* \* \* \*

The cause of this their suffering  
 Was not for any sin,  
 But for the witness that they bare  
 Against babes sprinkling.

\*       \*       \*       \*

I would not have you for to think  
 Though I have wrote so much  
 That I hereby do throw a stone  
 At magistrates, *as such*:  
 But that which I intend hereby  
 Is that they would keep bounds,  
 And meddle not with God's worship  
 For which they have no ground.

\*       \*       \*       \*

If we do love our brethren  
 And do to them, I say,  
 As we would they should do to us,  
 We should be quiet straightway.

\*       \*       \*       \*

If that you do mistake the verse  
 For its uncomely dress,  
 I tell thee true, I never thought  
 That it would pass the press.

"If any at the matter kick  
 It's like he's galled at heart  
 And that's the reason why he kicks  
 Because he finds it smart.

"From Sherborne town, where now I dwell,  
 My name I do put here  
 Without offence your real friend,  
 It is PETER FOLGER." \*

\* Of this Ossian of Nantucket, we find in the history of the island, the following incidental mention :—"The first mill of which we have any record, was one built in 1666, for grinding corn. During the previous year, the town voted to have a mill to grind their grain, which was to go by horse power. This vote, we know not for what reason, was not carried into effect. The one which they erected was carried by water, and was located on Nesco Pond. Peter

And, with this introduction, to you, of the earliest poet of Nantucket (and the only one who has yet been heard of, I believe), I will, my dear Morris, close my letter for this week.

Yours always.

Folger was agreed with to keep this mill, and his toll was fixed at two quarts for each bushel. This Peter Folger was an inhabitant of Martha's Vineyard. He was invited to remove with his family to Nantucket, to officiate as miller, weaver and interpreter of the Indian language; his son Eleazar was to act as shoemaker; and, as a proper encouragement to their several occupations, a grant of one-half of a share of land, with all the accommodations thereunto belonging, was made to the father. He accepted the invitation, and, in 1663, removed thither. Besides laboring in the callings above mentioned, he acted as surveyor of land." It will thus be seen, that, besides being a poet, Peter Folger was Nantucket's smartest man—miller, weaver, interpreter, surveyor—a proof of a theory of our own, as to the natural pluri'-cuteness of a poet, which it is charming to put on record.

P. S. Since copying the above, we have lighted upon another historical record, explaining who, (and how otherwise famous), was the mother of Peter Folger's "shoemaker son"—an addition to the "Loves of the Poets" that will not be uninteresting. The author of "Miriam Coffin, or the Whale-Fishermen," says:— \*

"Mary Morriel, the great-grandmother of Dr. Benjamin Franklin was maid-servant in the family of the Rev. Hugh Peters, one of the chaplains of Cromwell, who fled from England in the year 1662. Peter Folger, the first of the name who came to Nantucket, was passenger on board the same vessel, and became enamored of the maid, who was a buxom sensible lass, and *won the heart of Peter by laughing at his sea-sickness and betraying no fear of bilge-water.* Peter admired the cheerful endurance of Mary Morriel so much upon the voyage, that he proffered his hand to the maid, and bargained for her with the greedy old hunks, her master, and counted out to him the enormous sum of twenty pounds sterling, all his worldly store, for the remaining term of her servitude. He forthwith married the lass, and apparently had no cause of repentance; for he always boasted afterward of having 'made a good bargain.' "

## L E T T E R   X X I V.

Arrival at Nantucket—Peculiar Vehicle of the Island—Ramble in the Town the first Evening—Disappointment in the Physiognomy of the Place—Visit to an Old Inhabitant—The Macy Family—Picture of the last Indian Native of the Island—His Pride about Shoes—Kadooda and his Laws—Band of Music—Curious Nantucket Predjudices, formerly, on the Subject, etc., etc.

NEW BEDFORD, *September 18.*

OUR sixty-mile voyage to Nantucket drew to a close, somewhere about four in the bright and propitious afternoon, and, with the reluctant permission of a very shallow sand-bar, we scraped our way into the harbor. To the satchel-shaped island, this curving bay is like the month of a convenient pocket, and it is the calamity of the place that the almost innavigable sand-bar acts like too tight a button upon it. The difficulty of getting in and out with their whaleships, the necessity of unlading by lighters, and of sending their vessels to more convenient harbors for repairs, are obstacles to maritime prosperity, under which this home for whalemen threatens to become desolate.

The coming of the steamer with its load of strangers, was an event to the remote island, and (as at Martha's Vineyard) the population was largely represented on the pier. We had numerous offers of a ride, as we landed;

but, taking our way leisurely on foot, we had an opportunity to observe the style of the *private carriages* in which the islanders had come upon their errand to the wharf. They are peculiar to Nantucket\*, I believe—a sort of pew upon two wheels, or a box without seats, *simply to stand up in*, and with high sides around which runs a rope to hold on by. The steps are behind; and the half-dozen ladies who were the load for the single horse, jumped in and out with wonderful alacrity, changing places and stepping about, from side to side, as the animal trotted away, with curious facility of accommodation. For short distances, these light pew-carts are certainly comfortable enough, and they are singularly “handy” and available—vehicles, in fact, to take a walk in; or two-wheeled overshoes drawn by a horse. I should not forget to mention the chief economy of thus standing instead of sitting, as you ride—the natural instinct of easing the jolt by bending the knees, obviating, of course, the necessity of springs to the cart. Every passenger carries his own springs. So

\* In “Miriam Coffin,” the scenes of which are laid at Nantucket, these vehicles are thus mentioned: “A train of one-horse, two-wheeled, springless carriages, were got ready to the number of half a dozen, which were seen emerging from the outskirts of the town on a pleasant morning toward the close of September, 1774. There were then no carriages with springs. It was many years after this before even a chaise was tolerated on the island; and when two of these, with wooden elbow springs, were introduced by some of the wealthier families, the hue and cry of persecution was set up against them; and their owners were fain to abandon the monstrosities. One chaise, however, was allowed to be retained by an invalid; but it is related that even he was not permitted to keep and use it, unless upon all proper occasions he would consent to lend it for the use of the sick.”

light might the vehicle be made, in fact, with its omission: and substitutions, that it would answer also to be drawn by hand—a kind of hermaphrodite convenience serving either as a carriage or a wheelbarrow. I intend to improve the civilization of Idlewild, with one of these Nantucket sensibles (for lady-visitors to take walks with, up and down our long hills) immediately on my return.

With a few minutes' walk we came to a very usual sort of brick hotel, and sat down with a hundred other guests, summer-boarders and new arrivals, to a meal that was just ready—excellent broiled fish and tea most liberally watered—and, with the hour of daylight which still remained to us “after tea,” we started for a ramble. Mr. Grinnell and I had rambled together, before, on strange islands; and, in pretty strong contrast with what we now saw, were our remembrances of Bermuda and St Thomas, of Havana and Martinique. But, in the curious labyrinth of Nantucket's twisted streets, my accustomed fellow-adventurer was more at home than I, and we cork-screwed our way safely along a gradual ascent of sidewalks to the best-built neighborhood of the town. And I must own to an entire failure of my anticipations as to its character. Coming with a predominant impression got from reading the original bill of sale, by the Indians (“These presents witness, May the tenth, 1660, that we, Wanackmamack and Nickanoose, head Sachems of Nantucket Island, do give, grant,

bargain and sell," etc., etc.), I was disappointed to find only the tidy respectability of a thrifty little town, with clean and handsome white houses, neat fences, planted front yards, window-curtains and door-bells. No sign of a wigwam, no print of a moccasin, no squaw with papoose! Famous, too, the world over, for its fisheries, and yet no whale's fin to be seen for a window-blind, no old gentleman with a harpoon for a walking-stick, no front door with a shark's tooth for a knocker. And even the contrast of poor folks and their dwellings was nowhere to be seen. Every soul whom we met seemed to be in a state of prosaically happy competency, and every house looked as if its owner had all that he had any taste for. Life at Nantucket looked, somehow, most monotonously comfortable.

Under the porch of one of the best houses of the principal street, we found an elderly Quaker gentleman and his wife, enjoying the softness of the summer twilight; and in the cordial greeting given by these to my companion, I was happily a sharer. Our beloved old friend Sands had been a guest under the roof, and he had affectionately remembered us (while here, just before his death)—making them acquainted, by his kindly mention, with his Idlewild neighbors. It was sweet to gather, so far off, a flower sown for us by that dear old man! Mr. Macy, into whose house we now entered, was the son of the historian of Nantucket, Obed Macy, and, as the lineal descen-

dants of Thomas Macy, the first white settler on the island, theirs is a prominent name. The original type of the family seems to have been most faithfully handed down; for, a perfect portraiture of the manners and countenance of our host is given in the spirit and dignity of the beautiful letter which I will presently copy—the one written by the first Thomas Macy, just before his first coming to Nantucket. It is explanatory of what first brought him here; and, indeed, so interestingly does it read, that I will copy the two or three pages of history which embody it. Chapter two thus opens :

“The first emigration of the whites, or English, to the island being one of the most interesting parts of this account, we shall endeavor to be as explicit on the subject as the nature of the work, and the means possessed, will admit. Our information, however, falls far short of what is necessary to form a complete history.

“Thomas Macy being the first settler, it will not be deemed a heedless digression to state what we know of his early biography. In the year 1640, being then a young man, he moved with his family from the town of Chilmark, in Wiltshire, England, and settled in Salisbury, county of Essex, in Massachusetts. He lived here in good repute for twenty years, where he acquired a good interest, consisting of a tract of land of one thousand acres, a good house and considerable stock. But when this part of the country became more thickly settled by the English, dissensions arose among the people in regard to religion and religious denominations. Notwithstanding the purpose of their

emigration from their mother country was that they might enjoy liberty of conscience in religious matters, they themselves commenced the work of persecution, and enacted laws to restrain people from worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences. Among other restraints a law was made, that any person who should entertain one of the people called Quakers should pay a fine of five pounds for every hour during which he so entertained them. Thomas Macy subjected himself to the rigor of this law, by giving shelter to four Quakers, who stopped at his house in a rain storm. This act was soon sounded abroad ; for, being influenced by a sense of duty, he had used no means to conceal it. Being cited to answer for the offence, he addressed the following letter to the court, the original of which is preserved in the cabinet of the Nantucket Athenæum :

“‘ This is to entreat the honored court not to be offended because of my non-appearance. It is not from my slighting the authority of the honored court, nor fear to answer the case ; but have been for some weeks past very ill, and am so at present ; and notwithstanding my illness, yet I, desirous to appear, have done my utmost endeavor to hire a horse, but cannot procure one at present. I, being at present destitute, have endeavored to purchase one, but at present cannot attain it—but I shall relate the truth of the case, as my answer would be to the honored court—and more cannot be proved nor so much. On a rainy morning, there came to my house, Edward Wharton, and three men more ; the said Wharton spoke to me, saying that they were travelling eastward, and desired me to direct them in the way to Hampton ; and never saw any of the men afore except Wharton, neither did I inquire their names or what

they were ; but by their carriage I thought they might be Quakers, and said I so : and therefore desired them to pass on, in their way—saying to them, I might possibly give offence in entertaining them, and as soon as the violence of the rain ceased (for it rained hard), they went away, and I never saw them since. The time that they stayed in the house was about three-quarters of an hour ; they spoke not many words, in the time, neither was I at leisure to talk with them ; for I came home wet to the skin, immediately afore they came to the house ; and I found my wife sick in bed. If this satisfy not the honored court, I shall submit to their sentence. I have not willingly offended—I am ready to serve and obey you in the Lord.

THOMAS MACY.

"*27 of 8th mo. '59, [1659.]*

"He could now live no longer in peace, and in the enjoyment of religious freedom, among his own nation ; he chose, therefore, to remove his family to a place unsettled by the whites, to take up his abode among savages, where he could safely imitate the example and obey the precepts of our Saviour, and where religious zeal had not yet discovered a crime in hospitality, nor the refinements of civil law a punishment for its practice. In the fall of 1659, he embarked in an open boat, with his family and such effects as he could conveniently take with him, and, with the assistance of Edward Starbuck, proceeded along the shore to the westward. When they came to Boston Bay, they crossed it, passed round Cape Cod and extended their course by the shore, until they were abreast of the island to the northward, thence they crossed the Sound, and landed on Nantucket without accident. Thus we see that the same persecuting spirit that drove our forefathers from England, drove Thomas Macy from our forefathers ; that the same

undaunted courage which enabled them to breast the storm, and dare the wave, in search of a free altar and a safe home, prompted him, in search of the same blessings, to meet the same dangers. He sacrificed his property and his home to his religion; he found both in a remote region hitherto hardly known. His religion—we mean not its name, but its spirit—has been transmitted to the present generation, unsullied by the crime of persecution, or by the disgrace of inhospitality.

“The first care of these strangers was to cultivate a good understanding with the natives, whom they found very numerous, and who flocked around them with seeming amazement, having never before had an opportunity to see English people on the island. The natives were kind and hospitable, and readily lent their aid and assistance whenever they could make themselves useful—being fully satisfied that these new comers had not landed among them with hostile intentions, but in search of a comfortable subsistence. Macy now examined the island adjacent to the place of landing, and finally chose a spot for settlement on the southeast side of Madaket harbor, where he found a rich soil and an excellent spring of water. The harbor above mentioned was undoubtedly thought to be more convenient for navigation than the one on which the town is now built; but when the island became more peopled, the present situation of the town was preferred to Madaket, and the latter was accordingly abandoned.

“It being now late in the fall, the first care was to build a shelter for the family against the inclemency of the approaching season. After this was accomplished, they commenced a particular examination of the character of the place and of the people. They found the island covered with wood, and inhabited by about fifteen hundred Indians,

who depended for subsistence on fishing, fowling, and hunting. Game was remarkably plenty, and continued so many years afterward; and the adjacent shores and waters abounded with many kinds of fish. Here they spent the winter—a single family, confined on an island among native Indians, of whose character and language they were almost entirely ignorant. In the spring following, Edward Starbuck found means to return to Salisbury, where he was met with rejoicings, by his friends, who, sensible of his hazardous undertaking, had felt doubtful of his safe return. He was now able to give satisfactory information concerning many important things, of which before they were entirely ignorant. This information was the more interesting because, as appears by the earliest records, a considerable number of the people of Salisbury had it in contemplation to remove with their families to the island, about the time when Thomas Macy went there. In 1660, Edward Starbuck returned to the island, accompanied by eight or ten families."

A note to this chapter states that two of the four travellers who were thus sheltered from the storm by Thomas Macy, were *hanged afterwards in Boston* (in 1659), "for supporting the Christian principle as believed by the people called Quakers." Let us venture to express a wonder, whether, in the soil of Boston, there still lurks any of the indigenous quality, which, two centuries ago, produced that foul weed of intolerance!

Mr. Macy took us to the upper rooms of his spacious house, to show us the old family portraits—all corrobor-

tive of the same impression produced by his own countenance and by the foregoing history—and, after a delightful and most instructive hour of conversation with him, we took our leave—myself enriched, additionally, by the present of a copy of the History of Nantucket, written by his father.

Before getting to bed, that night, we received a message from another gentleman of this name—Mr. Macy, who has just married the sister of Miss Mitchell, the famous astronomer-ess of Nantucket—kindly inviting us over to the Athenæum, where was a picture which we had wished to see. Chancing to follow upon our steps, he had heard of our disappointment in finding the building closed; and, being himself the Librarian, he had most hospitably lighted the rooms and sent us word. We walked over in the glow of a moon which made even the angular lines of the stiff architecture of the town look picturesque, and, in the new structure containing the public library, found Mr. Macy and his lady awaiting us.

The picture we had wished to see, hung upon the wall—a full-length portrait of Abraham Quary, the last Indian of Nantucket, who died but recently. Of his especial habits and history I omitted, in the press of conversation, to inform myself, but, perhaps, a mention of him which I find in “*Miriam Coffin*,” will prepare the reader to be interested in the picture. One of the characters in

this semi-historical novel is "Quibby," an Indian murderer, the only one ever executed on the island. "Tashima," an Indian chief who became eminent as a schoolmaster, is another character. And "Judith Quary," an Indian prophetess, who figures largely in the story, is the guilty love of the murderer. The concluding chapter of the novel says :

"The body of Quibby was claimed by Judith Quary, who, in all his confinement, and in his last moments, appeared to be the only friend he possessed upon the island. It was yielded at her request; for the authorities believed, with the celebrated John Wilkes, that a man is of no further use after he is hanged. She caused it to be carried to her lonely hut, where she enveloped it in decent habiliments, and dug his solitary grave with her own hands. The tie that bound Judith to this Indian, was even stronger than death:—crime itself could not sever it. The offspring of Quibby and the half-breed, Judith Quary, is still living upon the island, and is a man quite advanced in years. As the name of Quibby was odious to the people he took that of his mother, which he still bears. He is *the last* of the Indian race that once owed allegiance to Tashima. Without a known relative on the face of the earth, he wanders about the island, an object of curiosity, possessing all the peculiarities of the Indian, developed in his mind and person. The lineaments of his face are those that a painter or sculptor might choose to copy after, with the certainty of transmitting to posterity an accurate and strongly marked specimen of the aboriginal countenance."

Of a human relic like this, the portraiture is, of course, most interesting to preserve; and Abraham Quary is appar-

ently most truthfully painted. He is represented sitting in the little room which was his home, and its scanty furniture, as well as his dress and habitual posture, is faithfully copied. The accustomed baskets of berries and vegetables stand on the floor behind him, but, by the side of his chair stand *his shoes*, and he is represented *barefooted*. Mr. Macy told us that the painter had some trouble on this last point—the old Indian proudly refusing to be painted with naked feet, though he most commonly was so seen—particularly as he *had* the shoes if he had chosen to wear them. A compromise was finally made, and he consented to be painted barefoot, *if the shoes were introduced into the picture*. The old man's figure is somewhat bent, but his head has a calm and benevolent nobleness of expression. He was never seen to smile, and he seemed never to notice what passed around him ; but he was always kind, and gentle, and it was well known that nothing escaped his observation.

There was another well known Nantucket Indian, of whom I regretted not to find some portraiture or historical relic—the one whose name has become classic in the phrase “Kadooda’s laws.” In the hope of suggesting to public opinion a little salutary *Kadoodity*, as to lawsuits, I will copy the historical mention which is made of the sensible old Indian by Obed Macy :

“This neglect (by the Indians) finally became so trouble-

some to the white settlers, that, in process of time, it became necessary to resort to some remedy. The expedient adopted was this: One of the most firm and intelligent of the natives, by the name of Kadooda, was selected and deputized as an auxiliary justice of the peace. It was made his duty to decide on such complaints for trivial offences as might come before him. Neglect of tilling the ground was not one of the least crimes that came under his jurisdiction. In some instances he was authorized, or rather indulged, to inflict corporal punishment. His mode of administering justice was, in many cases, found of real benefit; yet, in some others, the legal justices found their interference necessary, since Esquire Kadooda was liable to extend his authority beyond the bounds of prudence. It is related, we cannot say with what correctness, that, in some cases brought before him, *his first proceeding was to order both parties to be severely whipped.* It is further said that *this process had the effect of lessening the number of complaints and rendering his duties light;* and that, otherwise his whole time would have been taken up in the duties of his calling. Whatever may be the truth of the matter, one thing is certain, that 'Kadooda's laws' have become proverbial, and it is not going too far, we think, to say that their adoption, even in our times, if not strictly legal, would, in some instances, be morally just."

So, pass that phrase around, say we, and let it be the first question in a lawsuit—*isn't it a Kadooda case?\**

\* In Macy's quaint and pithy History of Nantucket, there is an instance given of Kadooda's administration of justice. He says of His Indian Honor "He was justice of the peace and very sharp with them if they did not behave well. He would fetch them up if they did not tend their corn well, and order them to have ten stripes on their backs, and for any rogue tricks and getting drunk. And if his own children played any rogue tricks, he would serve them

To our very great surprise, towards nine o'clock in the evening, we found a band of music playing in the town-square near the hotel. This open and flagrant anti-Puritanism was so wholly unlike all we had heard of the tone and temper of Nantucket that we strolled towards it scarce trusting our senses. By the light of the full moon, however, it proved to be a veritable this world's drum, a profanely positive fife and French-horn, and a carnally common and rather overworked clarionet—bassoon and other nameless instruments in the background. A hundred or two of boys and sailors were crowding around, and I noticed that great numbers of girls were strolling in the square, apparently without any idea that an attendant was necessary. Our sex, I believe, is more of a superfluity at Nantucket than in any other spot of the known world. The band, we were told, is a native one, recently organized, and that it is a very great innovation upon the spirit of the place, may be seen by a passage in the charming book from which I have already quoted. The author says :

the same sauce. An Indian was brought up for some rogue tricks, and he pleaded for *an appeal* to Esquire Bunker; and the old judge (Kadooda) turned round to Nathan (a white man present) and spoke in the Indian language thus: 'Chaukor kador taddator witche conichau mussoy chaquor;' then said Nathan answered thus: 'Martau couetchawidde neconne sassamiste nehote moche Squire Bunker!' which, in the English tongue, is this—'What do you think about this great business?' then Nathan answered: 'May be you had better whip him first, then let him go to Squire Bunker!' and Judge Kadooda took Nathan's advice. He was sure the Indian would not appeal to Esquire Bunker, for fear of another whipping."

"A ball—or a dance, if you will have it so—came but seldom at Nantucket. Indeed we have heard (though we hope the report of the result is a slander), that a concert of instrumental music, which is accounted not half so wicked as a dance, was proposed to be given to the inhabitants of that place, not many years ago, as the best and most acceptable return that could be made for hospitality shown to a numerous cargo of fashionables, who had been landed by one of our floating castles or steamers, and was defeated by the stiff-necked perversity of the Selectmen. A celebrated musical band accompanied the steamer, and they proffered a display of their talents at the town-house for the gratification of the townspeople. It is related that the town-crier had sounded his bell, and cried his '*oyez*' three times at the corners of the streets, to warn the good people (we give his identical words) that 'A celebrated consort of vocal and instrumental music would be given by the celebrated Bostin band at the town-house; and the ladies and gentlemen were invited to attend punctually, free-gratis-for-nothin' at six o'clock, P.M., in the afternoon! Again came the '*oyez*' three times at the next corner, until all the town was duly notified. Hearts beat high with expectations, and dresses and ribbons, bonnets and curls, were in a pretty considerable state of readiness to make a due degree of display at the town-house. But—alas!—the town-crier, with sadness in his heart, and bitterness in his speech, was obliged to retrace his steps, and tinkle his bell again, and cry his '*oyez*' to another tune. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' cried he, 'I am sorry to inform you that the celebrated consort by the celebrated Bostin band, which was to be given free-gratis-for-nothin', at the town-house at six o'clock, P.M., in the afternoon, *is postponed!*—because, ladies and gentlemen, the S'lackmen will not open the

town-house—unless the Boston band pays them *ten dollars!* . . . Dancing and music, then, may be set down as abominations at Nantucket."

Pretty well tired with our very various experiences of the day, we inquired the road to dream-land, towards ten o'clock—my boy, Grinnell (who was of our party) having gone thither before us, and he and his papa and grandpapa being considered by the landlord a natural triplet, and billeted in one room with two beds. The three generations, I believe, for the remainder of the night, left the waking to the moon.

Our journey of the next day, over the sand-prairies to Siasconset (the Nantucket Saratoga), must be the theme of still another letter, I believe, dear Morris, so

Yours, thus far, at least.

## LETTER XXV.

Mounting a Nantucket Steeple—Sensations in the Belfry—Curious Spanish Bell—Trip to 'Sconset—Funny Laws of the Place—Queer Poem—Arrival at the Arcadian Village—Hour on the Beach before Dinner—Sea-Mockery of Life's Story—Meeting with Ladies—Chowder-Time and Entrance to the Inn—The Manly Landlady—Excellent Dinner—Puppet-show of Whale-ships—Sharks on the Beach—Whittling-Room—Philosophy of Whittling—Return to Nantucket, etc., etc.

NEW BEDFORD, *September.*

I COME now, I believe, to my own travels and adventures in the far-away island of Nantucket.

Sea-air is drowsy, I always find, and we awoke late, on our first morning in the sperm-city. Of course we breakfasted on that wonder of nature, perfectly fresh fish caught in perfectly salt water; and with the spare hour which we then had, before our day's expedition across the island, we started for a stroll. My guide and companion, Mr. Grinnell, is famous, as you know, for approaching every subject by first getting a clear look at the horizon; and, selecting the tallest steeple in the place, he was successful in borrowing the key, and we mounted to the belfry for the circumscopic view which should enable us to enter upon our day's travels understandingly. To me, the extent thus gained, however instructive, was too monotonous to be

very inviting. I am no enthusiast about the sea (Nature, with her smiles and wrinkles all smoothed expressionlessly away !) and, though my eyes were not out of breath (as the rest of me certainly was, with the climb up those interminable stairs), I looked around with more curiosity than pleasure—Nantucket roofs, you understand, being the very tame foreground, and the middle ground of the landscape being nothing but an island of sand.

I was more interested myself, in what was nearer—*the bell* hanging in the belfry we stood in. It had the sign of the cross upon it, and an inscription in Spanish, and was among the “spoils of war”—a whaling captain, who had chanced to put into Lisbon when Napoleon was upsetting thrones and churches in that quarter of the world, having purchased this Catholic relic for a few dollars and brought it home to do service (as the church would phrase it) “for the devil.” It is of remarkably sweet tone, and rings Yankee heretics to their breakfast and dinner, I am inclined to believe, quite as musically as it ever called Portuguese saints to their matins and vespers—(and it is listened for as devoutly, perhaps, by the *friars of cod*, as it used to be by the *friars of souls!*)

But, all this while, the town clock was ticking audibly at our elbow—and, do you know the sensation of getting thus, as it were, inside the brain of old Time while he is thinking out the minutes? It was queer to me, somehow, to

stand in that cogitating belfry ! I felt as if I had got the start of the hand upon the dial—"in," at the conception of moments, instead of being "in at their death." And then—startlingly enough—it "struck nine" while we were there ! Nine awful strokes upon the very drum of my mortal ear, and none the less awful for our previous intimacy (yours and mine, my dear sinner and song-writer !) with the "tuneful Nine." I was quite as much struck as the bell, by that terrible clock hammer—however little the public weathercock over our heads (that *vane* reliance !) may have vibrated sympathizingly with the shock.

We were to start, at ten, for our excursion to Siasconset ; and, on reaching the hotel, we found our pew-cart (the native vehicle described in my last letter) already at the door. Though built to carry passengers standing, this one had an accommodation in the shape of a couple of cross seats, for the use of strangers. Mr. Grinnell was to be our driver ; and with a snug little horse to draw us the eight miles, we went off upon our journey at a round trot. The street, of course, lasted very little way. We were soon out in the unfenced prairie of sand—a slightly undulating surface of treeless and shirtless-looking country, so like to the desert I remembered on the route to Sardis in Asia, that I almost looked to see the turbaned traveller in the distance, approaching on his camel. It was difficult to believe that this waste was once covered with wood. Yet

so tradition tells us. The pine trees were sacrificed without thought or foresight, and the thin soil had not the strength to reproduce them. I should not omit to mention that we saw, here and there, patches of young pines, a foot or so in height, growing vigorously from the simply planted cones—a recent enterprise, for the rescue of the island from its unshaded barenness, which promises well.

But, while we are ploughing our way through this deep sand, let me be giving you an idea of the shrine to which it was a pilgrimage.

Siasconset, (whither we were bound) is the only spot in the world where a certain Arcadian Idea—*the Idea of utter social equality*—has ever taken up its definite abode. The sober Quaker historian, Obed Macy, says of it: “At Siasconset, all are on a level, or rather on an equal elevation. Useless forms and ceremonies are laid aside, and the little community, for the time being, indulge in a reciprocity and interchange of good feeling, which can be found in no place but in one situated precisely like Siasconset, and no other such place exists in the known world.” In the preface to a humorous poem called “Laws of Siasconset,” we read: “A remarkable simplicity and plain dealing distinguish the moral character of the place, insomuch that it amounts to a *political phenomenon*. The laconism ‘Sconset Laws has so much obtained, as a proverb, (denoting an entire freedom given to a friend, in all things

with decency), that it is frequently used at tea-tables in Europe."

At the remote end of the remotest and most peculiar island of our country—a toilsome and unfenced wilderness separating it even from what metropolitanism there is the harbor town of Nantucket—on a far-out bluff, which is fairly the jumping-off place into the Atlantic, stands this famous village of 'Sconset. Let me enumerate a few of its peculiarities of laws and manners, as commonly understood :

- 1st. Fashion wholly excluded.
- 2d. Introductions wholly unnecessary, all acquaintance mutualized on arrival.
- 3d. The water of the pump being Lethean, every error, fault and misfortune of previous lives reciprocally forgotten.
- 4th. Lawyers walk about, innocuous and professionally unemployed, as, for any and every misdemeanor, the " 'Sconset Court" consists of a friend for Jury, Reason for a Judge, and Conscience to plead both sides of the case.
- 5th. No distinctions of religion whatever.
- 6th. No flirts and no coxcombs.
- 7th. No scolding, by wife or husband, whatever the provocation.
- 8th. No manner of evil speaking.
- 9th. Leap-year perpetual, and unmarried ladies at liberty to make such emotional advances as they feel naturally called upon to give way to.

10th. Entire equality of condition, position, and moral and pecuniary estimation, no man's betterness than another being in any way recognized.

These principles are pretty much all laid down in the pamphlet poem called "Laws of 'Sconset," and I will give you the ring of its metal by a verse or two:

\* \* \* \* \*

"The song, the jest, the smile serene  
Amuse the friend that haunts it;  
Here old simplicity is seen,  
In ancient dress, at 'Sconset.

"When erring virtue asks excuse  
'Tis free good-nature grants it,  
And that which else would be abuse  
Is winked by laws of 'Sconset.

"The court guards well our dearest rights,  
And when the country owns it,  
Lawyers will starve with all their wits  
And curse the Laws of 'Sconset.

"The wight in town who swells with pride  
Or like Clesippus vaunts it,  
The paltry coxcomb lays aside  
And wears *the man*, at 'Sconset.

"Here the fond maid shall find excuse  
If first she make the onset;  
Her soul's elect her hand may choose  
By Laws of Siasconset."

etc., etc., etc. And this pithy ballad, of which these are a few scattered stanzas, is thus dedicated: "To the True Republicans of Siasconset, and to all who wish well to the

cause of Simplicity and Plain-dealing in Society, one with another, as in the Golden Age of the Ancients, this humble tribute is respectfully inscribed, by Philo-Simplicitas."

It was somewhere about noon when our long pilgrimage of sand drew to a close, and we began to see the chimneys of this famous village. On the two sides of a very broad street, as we drove in, were twenty or thirty neat little white cottages, no one more pretentious than another. The street opened apparently upon the Atlantic Ocean, the surf upon the beach closing its broad avenue at the end like a park-gate; and, with the unfenced desert behind us and the ocean beyond, we fully realized the impression made upon the man's mind who described 'Sconset as "the most *out-doors* looking spot on the face of the earth."

By inquiry at the comfortable low-roofed cottage that serves for an inn, we found it was still an hour to "chowder-time;" and as the bracing sea air made the noon sun comparatively powerless, I left my friend to see that his tired horse was tenderly cared for, and went down for a stroll upon the beach. It was exceedingly beautiful. The surf-chase of the calm and idle ocean was long and slow; and, while my boy amused himself with following out the retreating wave, to write his name on the tempting tablet of sand and see the return-wave wash it utterly away, (life's sad story, told thus mockingly by the sea) !

I gave myself quite up to the enchantments for eye and ear. Seated beyond reach of the breaking wave, I was listening with suspended thought to the monotone of the great anthem of the ocean when voices mingled with the music. A bevy of very charming looking women approached, accompanied by one gentleman, who ('Sconset-wise) immediately gave me their names and his own (chancing to know mine from having previously fallen in with my companion), and we entered into conversation, commencing acquaintance of course, at once, "at the second volume." It was curiously agreeable not to find oneself a stranger in a strange place! The sensation was new—something like finding it down hill to go up a ladder. I shall never see a lovely woman again, I am quite sure, without a sigh for the privilege of 'Sconset!

Our clock of appetite brought us punctually to the village inn at "chowder-time"—though, by the way, I call it an "inn," simply for lack of a better word. It had no "sign," no look whatever of a public-house. In fact, but for the forty or fifty nice-looking people lounging about the parlor, the porticoes and the entries, waiting for dinner, I should have scarce selected so private-looking a cottage for the house of entertainment of which I was in search. About the low-roofed and spacious white building with its green blinds, and, indeed, in the postures, groupings and countenances of the company, there was the genial and

simple air of a plain home and a family gathering—every individual present seeming to feel absolutely and unconsciously at ease. I made my way in, getting a frank look of greeting from one person and a passing remark from another; and, somewhere near the kitchen door, I met the tall and strong sandlady (the word *landlady* would hardly be true to the character of the soil), and in her frank, vigorous, and sensible face, I saw the full type of the celebrated *manly women* of Nantucket. Mrs. Parker (and I was pleased to find that my own middle name designated so fine a specimen of humanity) gave me a most sea-captain shake of the hand and a cordial welcome to 'Sconset. The bell, just then, rung for dinner; and she made use of the pull she already had upon my hand to lead me to a spare seat at the table, making some kind remark as to being one of our *Home Journal* parish; and, in further recognition of me as a stray editor, giving me and my hungry son, presently, the early plates of chowder for which we were so sea-sidedly ready.

And I must take a separate paragraph to say that that same *chowder* was among the most delicious compounds of savory nutriment that had ever been thankfully spoonfulled to my somewhat largely travelled lips. Among the things of which it is a pity to die in ignorance (I should say) is the effect of a 'Sconset chowder on the emotional nerve.

Mrs. Parker herself waited on table, with kindly words and most magical activity, and the conversation, among the fifty closely packed guests, was free and lively. I should say they were mostly strangers in Nantucket—from Boston, New Bedford, and the northern cities—and, though all of the class called “first” or “fashionable” at home, they were most effectively ’Sconset-ized by the atmosphere of the place. One very beautiful girl, with the hair, eyes, and complexion of Spain or Italy, looked, somehow, a little too stylish; but it was so evidently because she could not help it, that she was generally forgiven. As there was no wine on the table, dinner was soon over, and, with that pressing desire satisfied, for the time being, we betook ourselves promiscuously out-doors.

And there were two ’Sconset sights to see, towards which the contented company now made, leisurely, a spontaneous lounge. In a small building, not far from the front door, a retired whaleman had constructed a miniature puppet-show of his craft—several completely rigged whale-ships in the various processes of capturing and cutting up their whales. These miniature vessels were afloat in reservoirs of water, and the boats and their men and monsters were all in place and apparently in action. It pictured the interesting drama of Nantucket life so effectively that the spectator’s idea of it must be afterwards perfect. I looked around for the ingenious constructor of so curious a show, and he was

pointed out to me, at work in the adjoining barn-yard, a sexagenarian and intelligent-looking sailor. No price was asked for our admission; but one of the gentlemen present suggested that it was but reasonable to "pass round the hat," and he accordingly made a collection for the old tar, and left it with some of the "women-folks" in his cottage kitchen.

The other show was a *phalanx* of *sharks*—nineteen of these unmitigated monsters lying in a row, on the beach above the village. They had been caught in a shark-chase, by the 'Sconset fishermen, a day or two before. To a "coof" like myself (all persons who have the misfortune not to have been born on Nantucket, are contemptuously called *coofs* by the happier islanders), a score of sharks, thus lying on the sea beach—in their natural element, as it were, and yet harmless and approachable—was a great curiosity. They averaged about six or seven feet in length, and were of the bulk and proportions of Amodio, the basso at the Academy of Music—weighing, each of them, about four hundred pounds. Hideous, destructive and uneatable, these devils of the sea have still one redeeming point—the oil of their livers pays for catching and killing them. They are hooked and drawn to the surface of the water, to be knocked on the head with a club, then towed home and de-livered to the "old woman's kettle." I tried, in vain, while looking at their monstrous mouths, to see the sharkosophy of their creation. If made to swallow sinners (as

the Nantucket primer, I believe, tells warningly to the fishermen's naughty children), it is proof that impenitent fat folks are equally made room for. A retired whale-captain, who happened to be one of our party, told us of catching a female shark in the South Sea and hoisting her by a tackle to the side of his ship. She was then cut open, and *forty-five* little sharks wriggled from her into the water and swam away! It sounds like a "fish-story," but such, I was assured, is the easy fecundity of these mothers of devils, and such the precocity of their young—nature, apparently, omitting the infancy of such diabolical existences.

We saw one other peculiarity of 'Sconset—a *whittling room*; or the Nantucket substitute for billiards or bowling-alley. Along on the beach, at certain distances, are rows of huts, for the shelter of the islanders in rough weather, called "fishing-stages;" and of the fishing-stage nearest to 'Sconset, one apartment is devoted to the social *jack-knife*. I went in, with the two or three gentlemen who had rambled with me thus far; but, chancing to have no pen-knife in my pocket, I could not try my own hand at the cutlery of conversation; but I was told that *to talk and whittle* was unquestionably a duet of nature. The wooden framework of the little room, and the dozen wooden stools which served for seats, were carved with all manner of *jack-nifiana*—nothing wanting but a "medium" to re-conjure the long rainy days of talk of which these whittings had been the

accompaniments and the memoranda. Dexterity with the pocket-knife is part of a Nantucket education; but I am inclined to think the propensity is national. *Americans must and will whittle.* I know, at least, that the trees at Idlewild have a hard struggle with the admiring pen-knives of our summer visitors, and I am thinking now of building a pine shanty in the glen, with a sign over the door requesting strangers to do their whittling inside.

But the blessed the Paradise (I have always found) the shorter the visit; and around came the inevitable 4 P.M. and the pitiless pew-cart to bear us back again to the world. I was sorry to leave the place. I like its laws to live under. I was charmed with the spontaneity of acquaintance—delighted with the chat and the chowder. It may not be in our age that 'Sconset principles, desirable as their promulgation might be, will become any way general; but, for the breathing-spell of the heart and soul that has become form-and-fashion-weary—for an interregnum of suspicion of sin, and a calm of belief in mankind—try a week of this world-forgetting 'Sconset!

I have still a theme to discourse upon—the part of what I learned in this excursion, which interested me most, in fact—but my pen has already outrun its limits. In another letter, I may possibly get home from the Whalemans Isle; and, meantime,

Yours (with a 'Sconset flavor to it).

## LETTER XXXVI.

A 'Sconset Acquaintance—A Talk with a Sea-Captain Forty Years after he was chewed up by a Whale—The Harpooning and the turn of the Angry Monster upon his Enemies—The Marks of his Four Teeth—The After-History of the Crushed Mouthful—Six days to Port—Arrival at Peru—The Emperor's Physician—The Back-Country Doctor—Captain Gardiner's Invention of a Tandem Hammock—Ride over the Mountains between two Mules—Recovery after Six Weeks—Command resumed and Voyage prosecuted—Important Considerations as to the American Whale Fishery, etc., etc.

NEW BEDFORD, *September.*

AT 'Sconset, once more, if you please; though, at the close of my last letter, we were taking our leave of that agreeable spot—for I find that I have written four long letters about the *cradle of our country's sea-captains* without illustrating my subject by the mention of a single living specimen.

My most interesting acquaintance, at 'Sconset, was a Nantucket "skipper," who had once been chewed up by a whale—his surviving to tell the story, of course, being simply because the dainty leviathan, not liking the taste of him, had dropped the willing mouthful out again upon the clean table-cloth of the ocean. This was forty years ago; and it is a rare instance, you will allow, of a morsel's prov-

ing pleasant company so long after being rejected by a reluctant stomach at sea !

I should ask pardon, however, for speaking thus familiarly of one of the best specimens of manhood that I ever had the happiness to meet—a sea-captain now in his seventy-third year, as tall, straight, vigorous and cheerful, at this advanced age, as when “a mate” at twenty-five—one of the most respectable citizens of New Bedford at present, and enjoying a comfortable independence from the capture of the whale that wouldn’t eat him and of other whales who similarly left him unswallowed. But I must give you the particulars of the *half-mastification* of Captain Gardiner—who, by the way, in addition to his singular experience as a mouthful, has the peculiarity of being the *son of the first white male child born on Nantucket*.

Newly arrived at the honors of captaincy, our Nantucket skipper was cruising along the coast of South America—just off Peru—when there was a cry from the mast-head—“A whale ho !” The direction was given, the sails trimmed for the overtaking of the monster, and when within a mile, the boats were lowered, each with a crew of six, the captain himself taking the harpoon of the advancing boat which was to make the assault.

Quietly afloat lay the amphibious Shylock of the sea (the *levi-athan*, I take it, is of the tribe of *Levi*), and, as the swift boat came within harpooning distance, the inevit-

able iron, hurled by that strong arm, penetrated to his vitals. Not as usual, however, did the struck monster dive out of sight; but turning and making straight for his enemies, he rolled over his huge bulk to get a fairer gripe, and brought his jaws together upon the boat's prow—the forward half of that slight structure, captain and all, disappearing like the best part of an apple-tart in the munch of a hungry school-boy. The remainder of the crew, the helmsman and four oarsmen, had jumped overboard; and, as the whale with another roll, dived down to die out of sight, he threw up the unswallowed captain—the relief-boat pulling instantly to the spot and taking the crushed morsel and the five swimmers safely from the water.

It was the chewed-up right hand of the captain, as he sat by me at table, which at first excited my curiosity—(stimulating the inquiries which drew from him, at last, this thrilling story)—the stump, or what was visible below the coat-sleeve, looking like a twisted rope's end, but still retaining clutch enough to carry the chowder-spoon to his mouth. Four of the whale's teeth were driven into him; one entering his skull, a second breaking his collar-bone, a third breaking his arm, and the fourth crushing his hand—the remainder of his body being simply squeezed into a jelly. The healing of the wound in the head left a cavity like the inside of an egg-shell; and though the hair has grown over it (hair still brown and thick, with the stub-

born vitality of the un-kill-able Nantucketer) it tells after forty years, the size of the tooth that did it. I laid the ends of my three fingers very comfortably in the hollow.

But the after-history of this perilous adventure seems to me the most remarkable part of it. With a crew composed almost entirely of well-grown boys, and the ship lying becalmed in mid-ocean—six days' sail from any port, even with a fair wind—how was this crushed and mangled sufferer to be doctored and cared for? Captain Gardiner, providentially, though so nearly eaten up, retained full possession of his senses. His first mate was young, but a very smart lad, possessed, fortunately, of Yankee aptitude—good at everything; and, with the aid of the sufferer's directions, he did the work of a surgeon. The captain ordered him first to make splints, and then to set his broken arm—the collar-bone being left to heal itself, unset (as it remains to this day, without perceptibly affecting his erect shape or the action of his chest), and the other wounds being bandaged in the usual way. He was then laid on the cabin floor, and, with fans made of the leaves of the log-book, he was kept as cool as was any way possible—for it was the hottest of South-Sea weather. Feeling, however that his life depended on the exercise of his strong will, he gave orders that he should, by no possibility, be allowed to sleep over five minutes at a time. And, with this vigilant watch

kept up for six days, the ship (navigated by his directions, as he lay on the cabin-floor), entered the port of Peru.

A boat, sent immediately on shore, brought off the emperor's physician, who, on looking at the prostrate man and examining his wounds, advised only that they should send for a confessor. Other prescription, the medical man thought, would be useless, as death was evidently so close at hand. But the captain was of a different opinion. "A physician for the soul is very well, at proper time and place," said he; "but, at present, I want one for the body—and I happen to know of one who will cure me!"

It so happened, that—in a previous touch at that same port—Captain Gardiner had heard of the sick mate of an American vessel who had been left behind by his shipmates, and to whom, as a charity to a suffering countryman, he then offered a passage home. The man's message of reply was, that he fortunately stood in no need of the kindness, as he was under the care of a Spanish doctor who lived at Pura (a village back in the mountains), and who had taken him to his house and treated him like his own child. And for this kind old doctor Captain Gardiner, now sent, with all convenient haste—dispensing at once, with any further attendance by the physician of the emperor.

Early on the second morning arrived the "good Samaritan," and there was comfort in his first look and encouragement in his first words. He could cure the crushed man if

he only had him at his house in the mountains. But, how to get him there? There was no road—only a mule path along the edges of precipices, climbing wild cliffs, and scrambling through tangled ravines—forty miles of footpath, penetrating the depths of a wilderness.

But the captain's Yankee ingenuity seconded the good-will of the doctor. He constructed a new vehicle, as he lay (in the other physician's opinion) dying on the floor. A couple of long lithe spars were brought, by his orders, and a hammock was rigged to swing suspended from their centre. His friend had two mules, and, with the spars fastened to their sides, they were to walk, like the bearers of a palanquin, one before, the other behind him—a tandem hammock, in which he could ride, he was sure, quite as comfortably as men could carry him.

And of the two days' journey which he thus made over the mountains, Captain Gardiner's description was one of glowing remembrance. By the elasticity of the spars which supported him, he was borne without jolting; and, part of the time, he slept most refreshingly. But the path was a giddy one, to a sailor's eye—along the edges of cliffs where a single false step would have dashed him and his mules "into grease-spots," and now and then turning where his two spars formed a bridge from mule to mule, over a chasm—hundreds of feet of jagged rocks nearly perpendicular, stretching away below (he still thrillingly remem-

bers), as he looked occasionally over the side of his mattress.

They arrived safely at the mountain home of the old Spaniard, however ; and, here, all was comfort and kind care. They only differed on one point. The doctor thought the broken collar-bone should still be set ; but the captain resisted. He had felt the broken ends knit where they were, he said, and nature's mending would do for him. And he was right ; for, after forty years, he opened his shirt-bosom and showed me the ridgy projection of the broken bone, strong and healthy and doing as good service as a whole one, that very day at 'Sconset.

It took six weeks of kind nursing to put him on his legs again ; and then, with a grateful farewell to the kind old doctor of Pura, Captain Gardiner returned to his ship—taking command, and once more pursuing the object of his voyage. And, soon harpooning the requisite number of unsuspecting whales (who, for lack of a newspaper, had not the slightest idea, probably, that it was the very same man whom one of their number had chewed up, boat and all, three months before !) he returned prosperously home. For an instance of indomitable energy, this can hardly be outdone, I should think ; and, to see the erect, noble-looking and hearty old man of seventy-three, as I saw him, an hour or two ago—walking home to his dinner, with a light step and a good appetite, in New Bedford, forty years

after being eaten up by a whale in the South-Sea—is to get a fine idea of the stuff of a Nantucket whaleman!

I have given this narrative at full length, partly, of course, for its personal interest as an adventure of his own, chance told to me, by a fellow visitor at 'Sconset (the captain himself), but more for its significance as an exponent of a vein in American character. Our most valuable class of citizens, beyond all question, is our present complement of twenty thousand whale fishermen—our noblest national fleet, the six hundred and fifty-five whale-ships now afloat—our proudest American victory, the original Nantucket conquest of the whale. Yet it is not alone the ten millions and a half—(the value \* which they annually create)—which makes these hardy sons of Nantucket of importance to their country. It is the nursery for seamen, which is thus kept active and in constant discipline—a reserve guard, in fact, of our rights upon the sea amounting to at least a thousand of the ablest sea-captains

\* Mr. Grinnell, when Member of Congress, ten years ago, made a report to government as to the whale fishery; and he now gives me a corrected summary of this—with its present condition after the ten years of additional progress, which I here subjoin:

1857.—655 vessels (ships, brigs, barques, and schooners), amounting to 204,209 tons of tonnage, and manned with over 20,000 men and officers.

Imports, in the year 1856, of oil and whalebone and the value thereof, being the catch or produce of the whale fishery:—2,549, 641 gallons of sperm oil, at \$1 62½ per gallon, the average price,.....\$4,143,166 63

6,233,535 gallons whale oil, at 79½ cts.	4,955,660 32
2,592,700 lbs. whalebone, 58 cts.....	<u>1,503,760 00</u>

---

\$10,602,586 95

in the world, ready, at a call, to command ships and do battle for us. Looking at these thousand captains, and taking Captain Gardiner as a specimen of them (our actual Navy quite out of the question) what reasonable political economist would deny us the *mastery of the sea*?

I find, under my hand (accumulating as I have written, with the New Bedford library and well-informed friends within reach), a mass of facts as to the whale fisheries, for which it will take still another letter to find room. You will not think me too prolix, when you remember how scanty is the general knowledge as to this little island of Nantucket—*the real key to our respect among nations*—and, venturing to say, upon the strength of this, that I shall once more return to the subject, I will here write my present adieu.

Yours truly,

N. P. W.

## LETTER XXVII.

Visit to the Light-house of Sancoty's Head—View of a Curious Lake—Suggestion as to a new Revenue for Nantucket—Aquatic Cow-yard to Milk the Whale—History of the first Whale ever captured—The Spermaceti Aristocrat of the Ocean—Process of Killing and Preparing—Poetry of Indian life on the Island—Recent Connection of Nantucket with the Mainland by Telegraph, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *October.*

To your national pride in Nantucket—the little island that is the jewel-casket of our country's Ocean-value—I address myself once more. Come with me to our Cradle of Sea-captains.

On leaving that very curious Utopia which I described in my last—('Sconset)—Mr. Grinnell turned his pony's head a little to the north of our course; and with a half hour's driving through the unfenced sand, we came to one of the model light-houses of the coast, "Sancoty's Head." On this far out bluff of the Atlantic shore, stands a structure, which for scientific contrivance and mechanical completeness, is worthy to be named the Pharos of Alexandria; and my companion, in his Congressional life, having been the champion of this class of public improvements, we were cordially welcomed by the intelligent old sea-cap-

tain who now trims the lamp for his brother sailors. With the mysteries of lenses and burners, catoptries and dioptrics, I will not trouble your unwilling brain—but you will be interested to know how far this light can be seen; and the old skipper said that sailors had repeatedly assured him of their seeing it at forty-five miles distance—(the Alexandrian Pharos being recorded as visible at forty-two.)

From the summit of this tall beacon we got a fine view of the Sesacacha Lake—a shoe-shaped pond, that is a curious type of alternation between private and public life—being so slightly separated from the ocean, that in tempestuous weather, the sand-bar is broken over by the surf, and the fresh-water lake becomes a stormy and salt bay of the Atlantic. How truly a public man's country home is a Sesacacha!

But you will pardon my farmer's eye for seeing *a rural capability* in this singular pond; and one which in these days of scarcity of milk (particularly since the frail Lola's revelation of milk-baths as a preservative of beauty), might be turned to profitable account. Let me preface my suggestion by a passage from Macy's history of the whale:

“The different species of whale nurse their young as cows do their calves. The age at which the young are weaned is probably twelve months. When attacked by a school of *killers* (a species of whale not larger than a sperm-

whale two months old), they stop entirely, and lay like logs on the water; then the calves collect between the cows and run their heads as far out of the water as they can. When whales are frightened, they go as fast as their calves can swim and no faster. Cows and calves associate very freely together."

Now, this Sesacacha pond—a mile or two square, and with only a sand-bar, like a shut gate, to divide it from the sea—what is it but a most natural and manifest *aquatic cow-yard*, made on purpose for the Nantucket dairyman to milk his whale? As to any very great difficulty in driving home a herd of the "cows" whose habits of gregarious maternity are described above, a Yankee skipper would smile at the idea. And—once get them there, with their spacious dugs full of milk worth (say) twelve cents and a half a quart—who would imagine, for a moment, that the Nantucket women would not find a way to milk them! Or to enlarge the speculation, 'Sconset and Sesacacha might become Beauty-Baths—the whales milked into the pond, and the summer visitors taking their embellishing immersions on the spot—a local attraction that would add handsomely to the home revenues of Nantucket. (The annuity, expected from the island for this suggestion, might be moderate for the first year or two.)

But—joking aside—how much do you know of the history and habits of whales and whalers? Did you ever hear of the first capturing of the great Leviathan—the

present sea-slave of the Yankee? Considering the importance of the animal as a national commodity, it will, at least, add usefully to *general information* (and your *information*, my dear General, is not likely to be better than mine was on the subject before going to Nantucket) if I give an outline of whale-catching—its rise and progress.

The first thought of capturing the great fish, who had hitherto been seen only at what was considered a safe distance, was at the coming of one of them—of the kind called the “scragg”—into Nantucket harbor. The island was but recently inhabited by white men; and, their curiosity being excited by the apparition of this new “native,” they set about contriving how they should induce the floundering aboriginal to prolong his visit. The first harpoon was then invented, and, armed with this weapon, they went out in their boats, and assaulted and killed the whale. The various kinds of the animal being then numerous along the shore, the successful harpooners turned their attention to the killing of them, as a regular business. The government of the island gave it every encouragement, making presents of land to skilful men who would come and engage in it, and sending for information as to the best method of extracting the oil, etc., etc.

“It is remarkable (says Macy), that, notwithstanding the people had to learn the business of whaling, and carry it on under many hazardous circumstances, yet not a single

white person was killed or drowned in the pursuit, in the course of seventy years." "The Indians, ever manifesting a disposition for fishing of every kind, readily joined with the whites in this new pursuit, and willingly submitted to any station assigned them. By their assistance, the whites were enabled to fit out and man a far greater number of boats than they could have done of themselves. Nearly every boat was manned, in part—many almost entirely—by natives: some of the most active of them were made steersmen, and some were allowed even to head the boats: thus encouraged they soon became experienced whalers and capable of conducting any part of the business." "Whales being plenty near the shores, people were led to conclude that they should find them still more numerous were they to pursue them with vessels into the deep. In the year 1690,\* some persons were on a high hill, observ-

\* One of the public experiences of the island, about this time, records rather a curious fact as to what is considered the highest crime by the Indians:

"King Philip, Sachem of Mount Hope, in the year 1665, very soon after the settlement of the island by the whites, came there with a number of canoes in pursuit of an Indian to punish him for some heinous crime. There being but a small number of English at that time, they had everything to fear. Philip's hostile appearance and preparations made them apprehensive that he would destroy them, if any measures were taken to arrest his progress in pursuit of the delinquent. On the other hand, if they assisted to search after him, they dreaded the revenge of the island natives. They therefore declined lending their aid in any respect. Philip then went with his party in pursuit of the criminal, and at length found him on the southeast part of the island. His name was John Gibbs; *his crime was the mentioning of the name of Philip's father. Rehearsing the name of the dead, if it should be that of a distinguished person, was decreed by the natives a very high crime, for which nothing but the life of the culprit could atone,* Philip, having now the poor criminal in possession, made preparations to execute vengeance upon him, when the English spectators commiserated his condition, and made offers of money to ransom his life. Philip listened to these offers and mentioned a sum which would satisfy him: but so much could not be collected. He was informed of this, but refused to lessen his demand. The whites, however, collected all they

ing the whales spouting and sporting with each other, when one observed (pointing to the sea), "there is a pasture where our children's grandchildren will go for bread." But of the era of first taking the *most valuable kind of whale*, Macy thus gives an account :

"The first *spermaceti whale* taken by the Nantucket whalers was killed by Christopher Hussey. He was cruising near the shore for right whales, and was blown off some distance from the land by a strong northerly wind, where he fell in with a school of that species of whales, and killed one and brought it home. At what date this adventure took place is not fully ascertained, but it is supposed to be not far from 1712. This event gave new life to the business, for they immediately began with vessels of about thirty tons to whale out in the 'deep,' as it was then called, to distinguish it from shore whaling. They fitted out for cruises of about six weeks, carried a few hogsheads, enough probably to contain the blubber of one whale, with which, after obtaining it, they returned home. The owners then took charge of the blubber, and tried out the oil, and immediately sent the vessel out again.

"As the whaling business was found to answer their

could in the short time allowed them, in hopes that he would be satisfied, when assured that more could not be found; but instead of this, he persisted in his demand with threatening language, pronounced with an emphasis which foreboded no good. This very much provoked the English, so that they concluded among themselves to make no further offers, but try to frighten him away without giving him any more money. The sum raised, which was all that the inhabitants possessed, was eleven pounds; this had already been paid to him, and could not be required back again. Philip had surrounded and taken possession of one or two houses, to the great terror of the inmates; in this dilemma, they concluded to put all to risk; they told him that if he did not immediately leave the island they would rally the inhabitants, and fall upon him and cut him off to a man. Not knowing their defenceless condition, he happily took the alarm, and left the island as soon as possible. The prisoner was then set at liberty."

expectations, they were encouraged to increase the number and size of their vessels. Sloops and schooners, of from forty to fifty tons, were put into the business. Vessels of this size being supposed to be best adapted to whaling, near the coast, no larger ones were employed for many years. At length, whales began to be scarce near the shore, and some enterprising persons procured larger vessels and sent them out to the *southward*, as it was called, where they cruised until about the first of the seventh month, when they came in and refitted, and went to the eastward of the Grand Bank, where they continued through the whaling season, unless they completed their lading sooner, which frequently happened. The vessels that went on these voyages were generally sloops, of sixty or seventy tons ; their crews were made up in part of Indians, there being usually from four to eight in each vessel.

"At the close of the whaling season, the vessels were mostly drawn on shore for the winter, being considered safer and less expensive in that situation, than at the wharves. The boats were placed on the beach, bottom upward, and tied together, to prevent disasters in gales of wind ; and all the whaling gear was put into the warehouses."

The whale is a great traveller, and instances have been known of the striking of a whale in the Atlantic, and afterwards taking him in the Pacific—the head of the harpoon found buried in the carcass, being marked with the name of the ship which first fell in with him. The sagacity of the sperm whale, more particularly the Leviathan aristocrat, is very remarkable—the instantaneous knowledge they have, of one of their number being killed or wounded

even at a distance of three or four miles, being like the electric telegraph. When a whale is struck, those around who were feeding or floating undisturbed, with one accord make their way to the wounded whale; or occasionally they collect in a body and go off in the contrary direction with the greatest speed.

And now, let us come to our Nantucket historian once more, for an account of the process of whale-taking:

"As soon as a whale is discovered by the men at mast-head, the first inquiry from deck is, 'In what direction?' That answered, the sails are trimmed according to distance, and the ship made to head as directly for the object as possible. It is not desirable to approach the whale nearer than within about one mile. When at about that distance, the ship is stopped, and the boats are lowered into the water. If the whale is down, each boat takes the station where the officer commanding her believes the whale will come up. A large sperm whale remains under water from forty-five minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes.\* Their usual rate of going, when undisturbed, is about two and a half miles an hour. Being satisfied which way the whale was headed, when it went down, each one exercises his judgment as to where he thinks it will come up. There they anxiously wait; when it does appear, the nearest boat pulls on (the other boats take a position near by), and strikes as soon as possible, which is done by the officer in the head of the boat, who darts two

\* My 'Sconset friend, Captain Gardiner, told me that, by his experience, a whale would yield *just as many barrels of oil as he would stay minutes under water*.

harpoons into the whale. These harpoons, or, as we term them, whale irons, are attached to a line of two hundred and eighty or three hundred fathoms, coiled in a tub.

"The effect produced by the harpoon is various. Sometimes it penetrates a vital part, and kills the whale in a few minutes. This, however, is not often the case. The irons are not so much intended to kill the whale as to fasten to her. A more proper instrument, called a lance, is used to dispatch the whale; its head is much like the centre-piece in an eel-spear, the shank is about three feet long, with a socket, in which is fixed a pole of about eight feet. It is easily darted six or eight fathoms. It has a line or warp attached to it, by which it can be drawn back after being thrown. But it is better not to use the warp, but to go to the whale's side, and with your hand set the lance to the whale's life, and the work is done. Sometimes, immediately after the whale is struck, it stops, being severely hurt, and rolls, threshes, and tumbles about at a great rate, making the water fly in all directions. It is best to keep close to the suds, but not quite in it, and when she straightens out on the water, after her paroxysm, it is a good time to pull up, and throw in a lance. Sometimes, on being struck, they descend with great rapidity, taking three, or four, or even five hundred fathoms of line. If another boat is near by, and the line is likely to be run from the first boat, it is knotted to a second, and sometimes to a third, making in all eight hundred fathoms in one continued string. We do not think that whales descend to that depth; considerable line is taken out when they are coming up.

"When the whale is dead, it is taken to the ship, which keeps at a proper distance during the action. The work of taking off the blubber—that part from which the oil is

extracted—then commences. This is done by putting heavy tackles at the mainmast head. An aperture near the fin is made in the blubber, sufficiently large to admit a strong hook, which is attached to the winding tackles before mentioned, and the purchase is brought to a windlass: This is what is called raising a piece. After cutting what is necessary upon the head, as the men heave, the blubber is peeled or separated from the body or carcass by a sharp instrument made for the purpose, called a spade. When the blanket-piece, as it is called, is hove up to the mast head, another hole is made, and the strap of the other tackle is put through, toggled and hove tight, and the piece above cut off, and lowered into the ship's hold between decks. The second tackle, now having its piece, is hove till that is at mast-head, and is relieved. Thus the whale is kept rolling until it is rolled out of its jacket, just as a person would haul a piece of tape from a cane, if it were wound around it spirally from end to end. After the whale is once turned round, the head is separated from the body, and taken on board according to convenience: it generally produces about one-third of the oil taken from the whale, which is much more valuable than that taken from the blubber of the body as most of the spermaceti used in making candles comes from it.

"Sperm whales vary much in size. The *cows* and *calves* are generally found in shoals. Ten, twenty, and sometimes hundreds, constitute a school; and, when discovered, some of them are constantly on the surface of the water, spouting, jumping, playing, etc. The cows make from eight to forty barrels of oil. The male grows much larger; and what is termed a large whale will yield from sixty to a hundred barrels. It is thought, by some, that the males, or at least the most of them, about the third year of their age,

leave the cows and calves, and gang together : and it is not uncommon to see a school of forty barrel whales, and so on to sixties. Sometimes single whales are seen of a large size. To what depth a sperm whale descends in search of food (which is always squid), no person, whatever his experience may have been, can tell. One thing is certain—that the larger the whale, the longer it stops under water.

" After the blubber is hoisted on board, the ship's company immediately proceed to boil it out, while it is sweet. Before sailing, there is built on deck a solid, substantial brick-work, called a camboose, with a water course beneath it, in which are set two, and sometimes three pots, holding from one hundred and forty to two hundred gallons each, for the purpose of trying out the oil. The blubber, now in the ship's hold, called blanket-pieces, is cut into smaller parts, about five inches wide, and from twelve to eighteen long, called *horse-pieces*, from a plank bearing that name. It is then *minced* by a tool shaped something like a scythe, with a handle on each end, and is now prepared for the pot. After the oil is tried from the blubber, it is put into a large copper cooler, and thence into casks. When the oil is as cool as the climate will make it, the casks, having shrunk considerably, are coopered again, and put away in the hold, not to be moved again, unless they should leak, until the termination of the voyage.

" A stranger to the business may ask, what these monsters of the deep live upon, to grow to such an enormous size? *Their principal food is an animal of the fish kind, not bigger than a spider*, which it resembles somewhat in shape: the color is of a reddish cast. It is called bret, and is frequently seen on the surface of the water in such quantities as to make a reddish appearance of several acres.

"These the whales take into their mouths in large quantities, and the slabs of bone serve as strainers to discharge the water and retain the food.

"The eyes being prominent, the whale is enabled to pursue his prey in a direct line, and by inclining his head a little to the right or left, he can see his enemy astern. There is one row of teeth in the lower jaw, and sockets in the upper, to receive them. The number of teeth depends on the age of the animal. When the sperm whale spouts, he throws the water forward and not upward, like other whales, except when he is enraged.

"The tail is horizontal; with it he does much mischief in defending himself. The ambergris is generally discovered by probing the intestines with a long pole, when the fish is cut in two.

"There is a marked difference in the spoutings of different species of whales. A sperm whale has but one spout hole, and throws the spout forward at an elevation of about forty-five degrees. It is much thicker, and does not go as high as that of most other whales. A right-whale has two spout holes about eighteen feet from the nose, and consequently much nearer the lungs; the spout is thrown nearly perpendicularly, widening as it rises. The finback has two spout holes; yet the spout often rises in one jet, so as to cause it to be sometimes mistaken for the spout of a spermaceti; and the same may be observed of the humpback. Some whales appear more vicious than others. It rarely occurs that they show a disposition to act on the defensive. No rules can be given for the management of a whale which shows a disposition to attack a boat. All must be left to the judgment and courage of the officer."

So much for the poetry of industry and energy that fairly

impregnates the atmosphere of this little island. But there is also a poetry of Indian life, for which Nantucket will one day be curiously visited ; and, of the "warp and woof" of this side of its history, we find a specimen in a Report made some time ago to the Historical Society. Thus quaintly wrote Zaccheus Macy, (an ancestor of Obed Macy, already quoted), of the Indians of Nantucket :

" Waunohinanock was the first Sachem, when the English first came. . . . Next came the old Sachem called Wauwinet. And the said Wauwinet had two sons, the oldest son was named Isaac, but was mostly called Nicornoose, which signifies, in English, to suck the fore teat; and his second son was named Wawpordonggo, which in English is white face, for his face was one side white, and the other side brown or Indian color. And the said Nicornoose married, and had one son named Isaac, and one daughter; and then he turned away his proper wife, and took another woman, and had two sons, named Wat and Paul Noose ; and when his true son Isaac grew up to be a man, he resented his father's behavior so much that he went off and left them for the space of near fifty years, it was not known where. And in that time his true sister married to one Daniel Spotsor, and he reigned sachem, by his wife, near about forty years ; and we made large purchases of the said Spotsors. And then about sixty years past or more, there came an Indian man from Nauset, called Great Jethro, and he brought Judah Paddack and one Hause with him, and he challenged the sachem-right by being son to the said true son of Nicornoose ; and when they first opened the matter to our old proprietors, they

contrived to keep the said Jethro close, until they could send some good committee to find out by our old Indians, whether they ever knew or heard of the said Nicornoose having such a son gone, and they soon found out by the old Indians that he had, but they had not heard what was become of him. So they soon found they should lose all they had bought of the said Spotsor, then they held a parley with him said Jethro, and agreed to buy all his right, title and property that he owned on said island, as appears on our records. And the said Nicornoose gave deeds to his two bastard sons, Paul and Wat Noose, forty acres each, a little to the eastward of Podpis village.

"The first sachem at the southwest part of the said Island. His bounds were at the said Weweder Ponds, and his name was Autapeeot. Next to him was his son called Harry Poritain. Next to him was Peter Mausauquit. Next to him was Isaac Peter. Next to him was lame Isaac, of whom we bought the last and all that sachem-right: and their habitation was Moyaucomet, which signifies a meeting-place, and their meeting-house they call Moyaucmor. And the said Autapeeot was called a great warrior, and got his land by his bow. . . . I have been at their meetings many times and seen their devotion; and it was remarkably solid; and I could understand the most of what was said; and they always placed us in a suitable seat to sit; and they were not put by, by our coming in, but rather appeared glad to see us come in. And a minister is called *cooutaumuchary*. And when the meeting was done, they would take their tinder-box and strike fire and light their pipes, and, may be, would draw three or four whiffs and swallow the smoke, and then blow it out of their noses, and so hand their pipes to their next neighbor. And one pipe of tobacco would serve ten or a dozen of

them. And they would say ‘tawpoot,’ which is, ‘I thank ye.’ It seemed to be done in a way of kindness to each other.

“The most noted Indians in Autapscot’s bounds were Benjamin Tashama, a minister of the Gospel, and a school-master to teach the children to read and write. He was grandson to the old sachem, But there was an old Indian, named Zacchary Hoite, a minister before this said Tashama, but he did not behave so well. *He told his hearers they must do as he said, but not as he did.*

What material for the novelist, the poet and the political economist, is accumulated in the history of this little island ! And what an advance upon the island-news of a single day, when first settled, is the paragraph in the newspaper of this very morning, announcing that “the Telegraph cable”—by which intelligence will pass, in a second, between Nantucket and the mainland—“was successfully laid.” What would “Waunochmanock the first Sachem” have said, had a prophet foretold, that, in two hundred years, such a miracle would be in daily use by the white man ?

But the bottom of my page reminds me that I am again outrunning epistolary limits ; and I must close—leaving however, very many most interesting points of Nantucket history untouched upon. It is stuff for a most valuable book, in fact ; and for him who has time and taste to write it, I can conceive no pleasanter befalling than a summer sojourn at ’Sconset, with pen, ink, and gossip, or idleness at will. I sigh, myself, to say adieu to it, here !

Yours, at Idlewild again.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

To Invalid Morris—Morning at Brady's—His Reason for moving further up Broadway—Photograph of Dana and its uses—Bancroft, Dr. Potts, Russell Lowell, etc—Likeness of Lord Napier—Description of "Imperial Photograph"—Comments on Photography and Portrait Painting—A true Likeness and its Injustice—Suggestion of an Inquiry for Artistic Philosophy, etc. etc. etc.

IDLEWILD, March.

YOUR very upright body, like your very downright word, is so habitually *valid*, that, to look upon you as an *in-valid* has a certain relish of variety. On your weary road of recuperation, with diet and the doctors, you are, for the present, at least, among those to whom a letter of wile-time may be tenderly addressed—a word of sympathy or so, to make you forget the *grim pill* of your *pilgrimage*. Fortunately, on the mantel-piece before me stands a pale face—your photographic portrait, in which the color, more or less, is left to the imagination—and, to amuse that reduced and *up-brady'd* Morris, therefore, shall be the sympathizing aim of this present "Letter for Invalids."

And, speaking of Brady and his photographs, it may amuse you if I describe my chance morning among his novelties when last in town. My walk down Broadway was in search of things less written of already, but I was caught, as other

birds are, in going by—and let me tell you how “the salt was put on.”

Everybody, as you know, walks very slowly for a few steps after passing Williams-and-Stevens’—the mental struggle as to whether one is rich enough to go back and buy the new engraving in their seductive window, diminishing the walking-pace of the passers-by (I have generally observed) to about one-half of its previous speed. Of this peculiarity of that particular spot of sidewalk, Brady, with his philosophical tact, has wisely availed himself—removing from downtown, where the promenaders walk very fast (in sight of the halls of justice and the city clock), to this higher number of Broadway, where, as I have just stated, they come under a daily renewed fascination and, with slackened pace, look more leisurely around them.

Loitering past Brady’s door, therefore, with the struggling deliberateness of the rest of the crowd, my eye fell upon what seemed to me a mezzotint likeness of Dana—a portrait it seemed to me, most effectively artistic, while, at the same time, it had the lifelike verisimilitude of daguerreotype. I was unprepared to see a photograph so large as this (it gave the figure at two-thirds length, and was of the size called “imperial” in engraving), and, to my eye, it was the utmost perfection of a likeness. Dana’s face is a very strong and handsome one, as everybody knows; but this, of course, was a secondary reason with sagacious

Brady, for making him the *belle-pull* at his door—that name as we all remember (*vide* “Dana-e,” and “Danaides” in the Classical Dictionary) having great attraction for the “showers of gold,” and marriageable young gentlemen.

To make an inquiry as to this new stride in perfection of portraiture, I mounted to the sunshine-shop above, where, as I expected, our old friend Wandesford and my previous acquaintance, “the god of day,” were busily at work—the latter making the pictures with his usual rapidity of literalness, and the better educated artist supplying afterwards the god’s inappreciative and unflattering omissions. Quite a crowd of ladies, as usual, were in attendance; and the especial object of interest, at the moment, was a photographic portrait of Lord Napier, just completed. The new English Minister had made a visit to Brady, on his way to Washington, and the likeness he thus left behind him represents very much “the right man for his work.” It is of the type which is found, as a class, only in England—imperturbably observing and intellectual, but so undemonstratively well-bred as to be within a hair-line of bare plainness and common placeness—and, over and above what education and position have done for the face, there is in it a look of reliable worthiness and integrity, which it is comforting to know will be one of the “copy-books,” at Washington, for a while.

Among other portraits in this same style there was a wonderfully successful one of Bancroft, the historian; a very fine copy of the majestic frame and face of the eminent clergyman, Dr. Potts; an excellent one of James Russell Lowell, and a faithful one of Bryant—though Lawrence's portrait of our great poet is better, inasmuch as that artist, who is daguerreotypically true to nature, could still shade off the abrupt line with which Thanatopsis decapitates his beard. This is one of the few faces that would look quite as well if kept “severely beardless,” but the expression is unfavorably fragmented by the covering of only two-thirds of the chin. On a temple of fame like your inspired lips, Mr. Bryant, the admiring eye looks for the natural eaves—unless the facial architecture be that of the “pyramid proper,” and chin, mouth and nose, be left bare from pinnacle to base.

For the improvement of mechanism, by which *so much larger a likeness* can now be taken, Mr. Brady, I believe, is to have the credit; though I think the other secret of the matter—the knowing how sunbeam, pose and pencil, should be *Brady'd* together—shows more the perseverance of the man. He has employed thirty or forty artists to experiment upon this. The photograph, as you understand, is first taken by the machine, with artistic directions as to the choice of look and posture. A sitting of fifteen minutes is then given to an accomplished crayonist, who thus makes his memoranda for *stippling* the otherwise imperfect

picture—supplying, with the pencil, that is to say, the life or expression left wanting by the photograph's soul-omitting fidelity to mere matter, and removing the mechanical blemishes, such as the deep black with which the photograph copies light eyebrows, and similar defects in shading, which are easily corrected. To do this judiciously—to add life to the dead photograph without altering its type and truth—requires, of course, practical skill and the best judgment.

There are portraits, of course, which the photograph can never supersede—those in which the artist combines numberless fleeting expressions into a single look, or a variety of graces of movement into single posture—but, for men, and particularly for those whose characters are to be read by a single glance at their outward form and feature (as all certainly are not), the photograph, with its recent improvements, is by far the best likeness taken. Even as a saving of labor for the artist—doing nineteen-twentieths of his work with infallible accuracy of proportion, and leaving, for his hand, only the last touch, which is always the main call upon his genius—it is an invaluable discovery. We thus speak of the best artists—but all artists are not “the best,” and the photograph may well supersede the inferior ones altogether. Though, still, even good artists have not the courage of the photograph. Cromwell was obliged to insist that the wart upon his nose should be

painted, and there is many a departure from beauty, which a too flattering pencil will slight over, but which, at the same time, is indispensable even to an ideal of the face's character.

All kinds of people are not equally fortunate, in being well taken by the daguerreotype; nor are all kinds of looks, beauty and expression, equally good subjects for the instrument. Some of us know better than others how to put on the best look; some are handsome only when talking, some only when the features are in repose; some have most character in the full face, some in the profile; some do the writhings of life's agonies with their hearts and wear smooth faces, some do the same work with their mouths, and the muscles of the cheeks, eyes and nostrils. A portrait-painter usually takes all those matters into account, and, with his dozen or more long sittings, has time enough to make a careful study of how the character is worked out in the physiognomy, and to paint accordingly. But in daguerreotyping, the sitter has to employ this knowledge and exercise this judgment for himself. And he should give time to it, and take advice upon it. An artistic eye, either professional or of natural good taste, is within consulting reach of most people, and, with the aid of such a counsellor's familiar knowledge of the face, the best look, costume and posture, should be settled upon before coming to the instrument. Fortunately, the process is brief and

the cost small, so that a dozen experiments can be made in the time which an artist would take for a single sitting. It would be hard, if, in twelve different views of the face, the best look should not be tolerably approached.

But I was not forgetful of *you*, my dear invalid, while discoursing upon all these points with Brady's upper-chamber-lain, Evans (for the photographer himself was away), and yielding gradually—as you know I did at last—to be led to that same fatal upper chamber. You had sent me *your* photograph, I remembered. It stood affectionately, with its breast in a cloud, on my mantel-piece at home. Well—yes—I would send you *mine*—in tender reciprocity of bust.

And, they did me!

But I protest—now, and while I last, and trusting you will remember it in my obituary—against the misrepresentation of my natural temper in that ferocious photograph. What! that cross-looking chap—that to pass for the likeness of a dweller among the cows, who could get the unanimous vote, this day, of the County of sweet milk in which he lives, as its most good-natured inhabitant. “Taken from life,” it is true—but my habitual expression of unwilling industry is made to look like bad temper! And, let me linger a moment to explain how, in this (as probably in many another man’s likeness) photography errs. While, to a stranger’s eye, there stands the picture

of a man who is savagely saying “ What’s that to you ?” it is (with my consciousness of the look) simply a man saying to himself, “ Let me look a little closer into this !” To compel the reluctant powers of attention (sufficiently to write for a living), has been the one hard effort of the life there chronicled. Concentration of mind upon a paragraph sounds easy ; but it requires (for me) an effort which crowds jaw and forehead together with the sensation of a pair of pincers—makes the eyes pucker, and the lips tighten and the nostrils strain excitedly open. Of course it is *editorial* attention, of which I speak so feelingly ; for, little do those know, who have the luxury of *but one thing to think of*—clergymen, men of business, lawyers, inventors and mathematicians—what it is, twenty times a day, to take off the undivided attention from one subject and put it as undividedly upon another. Most thinkers change horses, as it were—travelling with renewed freshness as they apply different powers of the mind to the different phases of their one vehicle of a subject—but, to an editor, it is a frequent change of vehicle, and forever the same old horse !

And now (to forget *you*, while I call mother nature to account, my dear Morris), is virtuous industry to be thus chronicled on the drudge’s exemplary face as ill temper ? With the loss of youth, of freshness, of strength, of joyfulness, it is easy to be content. Decay is not always forbid-

ding, and I have a butterfly willingness to be rid of the worm I am weary of—but there are those to whom I would fain look unforbidding while I am here, and (I could ask it tearfully, sometimes)—in proportion as I “work hard” am I to “look cross” to the child upon my knee?

It is a question which I wish our philosophically artistic brother editor of *The Crayon* would take under discussion—just how far idealized likenesses of authors are desirable or proper. Here, on my library wall, for instance, hangs Richmond’s portrait of Prescott—an exceedingly beautiful face, which it is delightful to look up and feast the eye upon, when under the spell of one of his historic anthems of description. But I have never seen Mr. Prescott; and this probably idealized picture of what the real face tells of the mind beneath, may be about as like (judging by other engraved portraits of originals I know), as an elegiac poem is like the undertaker’s bill for the same event. But, would I prefer, in that case, a veracious daguerreotype of Prescott, to rest my eyes upon? Certainly not. I would take some trouble, on the contrary, not to see such a daguerreotype at all. It takes an artist of very high genius, however, to give a characteristically idealized portraiture of a great mind. And why should not this constitute a higher and separate department of art—portraits of authors as seen in their books, but true only to the original native type of their actual features? Such

are our likenesses of Byron, Shelley, and Tennyson, I presume. And there is many a balloon of portrait-fame gracefully afloat for immortality, which would be left behind if collapsed by daguerreotype into a bundle of rags.

And so, my dear invalid, I have sung you my ditty ! You have gone to sleep while it was singing, perhaps, but at any rate, it is long enough, for this time. Strength and patience to you in your confinement at home ; and, that you may live to reach 107 (Fulton street) is the earnest prayer of

Yours always.

## LETTER XXX.

To Morris at Mobile—Out-door Luxury of Southern Climate—“Tiff’s Exchange”—Southern Noon-ing—New Orleans and its Chaotic Marvels—Shirt-sleeve Promenade—Recommendation to Transplant a New Orleans Fashion to Broadway—Invalid Advice—Caution as to Trifles, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, April.

WHERE are you, this April noon? Out of doors with the mocking-birds and the magnolias, I am very sure; for, that is a luxury of the South which should be sung like Italy’s “*dolce far niente*”—it has *no imprisonment for the invalid!* And, what a difference this makes! When I saw you in New York, the other day, your warm parlor was your world. To-day (at Mobile, most likely) you feel as if the warm world was your parlor! Open air is your sick-chamber. Sunshine is your dressing-gown and blanket. You are at large on a planet—not pent up in a sick-room! And this, I say, is much. Let them deny, if they please, the abstractly curative properties of southern air. It has a “charmed ring”—the horizon—whose spell of limitless luxury is a medicine to the mind.

Suppose you at Mobile, then—tenth of April and twelve o’clock—nostrils expanded, pores unanim-open-ous, and

lungs with no possible objection. And now, after perhaps a drive out upon the "shell road," you have stepped into "Tiff's Exchange," to see the men and "take a cracker."

I deliberately perpetrate the iniquity of expressing my most delightful memory of having enjoyed at Mobile what is commonly understood by the phrase just quoted! Yes—at Mobile and at New Orleans. And so will you, my dear Morris! But, will the "Maine Liquor Law," before it opens upon us, allow me to say one little explanatory word as to the southern Noon-ing that I speak of?

The northern midnight (socially) answers to the southern noon. The daily meeting, that is to say, for the chat over the genial glass, is at the *other* "twelve." It sounds wrong, of course, to speak of resorting to a "bar-room" in the middle of the day. "A julep and a straw"—as I see them written in this virtuous ink—are fearful words! But the bar-room, in that latitude, is not what it is in ours. Or, if drinking-places for rowdies are to be found at the South, there are others for gentlemen. To step in and "take a cracker," as you are asked to do, at the lunch-hour of noon, is to meet the most distinguished men of the place where you are—and to meet them with a freedom from previous inconvenience, present trouble or subsequent obligation, which is even Utopian in its advantages over a midnight and invited party. One of the finest collections of intrinsically superior men that I ever saw, was in that

very bar-room of "Tiff's," at Mobile, the chance noon that I was there—judges, counsellors, planters, merchants, editors—all assembled, apparently according to habit, to have an hour's chat over the optional glass and cracker. The conversation was genial, quiet, high-bred, and at everybody's absolute ease! And, really, how could individual independence in society be better contrived? Each man was intrusted with the safe-keeping of his own temperance —each man wore what he pleased—sat or stood as he pleased—came or went as he pleased—talked, or was silent, or read the papers, or smoked his cigar, as he pleased. Everybody was there with whom he was likely to have occasion or wish to speak particularly, and no one man was put under obligation by the trouble which any other man had taken in coming. There was no exclusiveness in those present except by self-selectiveness of group—no presence or absence except of a man's own choosing, or by the natural crystallization of character and manners. What could be more admirably convenient?—what more agreeable?—what of a more elevated social tone, at the same time that it was economical and impartially equal? I do not think we sufficiently admire the southern Noon-ing—built, though perhaps it partly is, upon southern qualities, their auto-responsibility, auto-protectableness, auto-dignity and auto-contentedness of position and estimation. But, if the "spirituous liquor" be the only objection, could we not get

it up at the North, over crackers and *tea*? Suppose Wall street had its tea-pot for brokers—Williams-and-Stevens, or Goupil & Co. their tea-pot for artists—Union Square its tea-pot for men of leisure—and the Astor its tea-pot for editors and lawyers. It is a little Turkish, of course, to thus leave out the ladies—but we will come to their tea-pots when they invite us. Besides, men require a social daily Exchange—a recess from work, and a gathering between twelve and one—or some time and place with facilities for courteous and incidental converse with such male company as they choose. There is enough of the schoolboy left, in all of us, to need the “intermission.”

While I have been thus spinning my cobweb for the improvement of our favorite world, my dear Morris, your “noon-ing” at Tiff’s is over, and you are calling on some of our family, (driven round, very likely, by the charming women we know of). I say “our family;” for it is the happiness of addressing the level that we do—the homes of the refined and the cultivated—that our subscription list is a chronicle of friends. Wherever the *Home Journal* is welcomed, we rejoice to have the privilege to follow. You are realizing this now, as, probably (with your unmigratory habits) you never did before. And there is a difference in subscription-lists, in this respect. As a catalogue of homes—such homes as it is delightful for the traveller to be recognized and welcomed in—I am sure that the

subscription-list of the *Home Journal* is unequalled. Your name, as its editor, as you come home through the South and West, will be a magnet to draw the best people to your side, to open the best houses to you, to set a chair for you at the pleasantest firesides and tables. Find one of our habitual readers, and you find a person of taste, home-culture and refinement, I believe it is everywhere understood. And of our many thousands, picked and reached constantly in every quarter of the country, there are likely to be always some near you and around you—a *Home Journalist* everywhere, and charming to discover and claim a friend in. I write always, as you very well know, with this consciousness at the point of my pen. It is the key to a tone and style which were else, perhaps, sometimes, too personal and familiar. But, that it is felt reciprocally and equally at the outermost limits of our electric circle, the genial phrase or postscript in almost every letter that comes to us abundantly shows. Our Fifty-thousand Public is our cordial friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus far had I written, two days ago; and now, while I wind up my letter to you, dear Morris, you are perhaps luxuriating along to New Orleans—(I hope, with Captain Ensign and his splendid boat, which I so pleasantly remember)—or, you are fairly at the mocking-bird city, eating strawberries to strange accompaniments of sight and

sound, and wondering, in the very face of previous certainty on the subject, as to where you geographically are ! Languages, physiognomies, costumes, buildings, vehicles, in every possible variety—temple-domes of bar-rooms by the side of Parisian shops ; *cafés* over oyster-cellars ; one-story French houses and three-story Mississippi steamers—*femmes à la mode* and tow-clad negroes ; Creole dandies and Quadroon belles ; flower-girls and Sisters-of-Mercy ; well-dressed gentlemen promenading in their shirt-sleeves, and a mighty river flowing awfully above the level of the streets—I fancy you (with your 107-Fulton-street eyes) walking abroad in such a metropolis of marvels !

But, pray bring home with you (and this warm day of April pictures it vividly to my memory) that New Orleans fashion of *shirt-sleeve promenade* ! You will be expected to have altered a little with your travels, you know ; and, to walk Broadway with your coat off, the first hot day after you get back, will scarce be “going it too strong,” in the way of a novelty, I think. For was there ever fashion more sensible and becoming ? The French gentlemen whom I saw in this cool array, the hot May noon that I was strolling to the levee, (and I was told that it was common, among this class alone of the New Orleans population) were otherwise in unexceptionable promenade dress —well-brushed black hats, straw-colored gloves, white pantaloons and black-satin cravats—but, to all this and

their walking-sticks, the *loose white linen of the bust and arms* added a spaciousness and freedom which amounted to positive magnificence. Every artist will understand the effect of it. It gave an oriental *abandon* to our disfiguring angularity of street dress. They looked twice as handsome fellows, I venture to say, as they would have done in tight coats, and they were, at least, four times as comfortable. Try it while you are there, and lead off the fashion for us on your return! Brady will photograph you—Morris in his summer solstice of shirt sleeves—and we will give it to our readers in a wood-cut.

It is upon the strength of the better news of your health that I am writing to you so gaily, of course. The paragraphs in the Southern papers read cheeringly—not colored at all with the low spirits in which you left us. To be out of harness was the main medicine that you wanted, and the delicious clime and its incidental surroundings will do the rest. But there is still a caution to be given to you—(one that every invalid of long experience has wished he had been earlier made to feel the importance of)—*be careful about trifles!* The stomach's just-enough-and-not-too much, requires nerve, calculation and precaution. To insist upon sleep enough; to prevent good-natured friends from fatiguing you; to let nothing interfere with exercise enough; to force nothing upon nature, but, with generous care, to give her all she clearly wants, of stimulus, variety,

amusement and relaxation; to turn the overworked mind out to pasture, and look only on the bright side—all this is like a chemical experiment with multitudinous elements, which a single inattention to a trifle will wholly defeat. Habitually healthy, you will be apt, like most other unpractised invalids, while following the best general advice, to let some little trifle upset it all. Play the martinet with those *well-man carelessnesses*, my dear Morris, and so drill yourself into speedy convalescence, and return to

Yours always.

## LETTER XXX.

Pleasure of having a Friend at a Distance—Trip to Town and first Call for Newest Gossip—Bridal Reception, and re-beautiful-ness of a Retired Widow—Omnibus-Drive down Broadway—Petticoats doing Penance—New Fashion of Coat-Collars—Throats dressed differently—Beards—Boots—Hats—Dinner at Dietz's—Mrs. Hatch at the Tabernacle--Morris in Florida, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *April.*

It is a luxury to have you so far off, that we who are left behind, are now seen in the “good light” of foreign places and people. Distance (lovers seldom confess) lends enchantment to the view! When, before, would you have been interested in a description of the dear old New York that holds you so habitually in her every-day bosom? News from us, now, will have a relish for you, like news from London or Paris. It is worth managing for—this perspective effect—got only by absence! Candles burn darkest nearest the *wick*, and oh the similar *wick-edness*, sometimes, of those we live with! Let me take advantage of this (our temporary looming up, and brightening in your far-away eyes), by gossiping to you of my yesterday's New York experiences—or rather of a trifle or two among the thousand things I saw and heard when I ran down to

read proof-sheets, and look a little to the office-matters that so miss you.

From the steaming tea-pot of the railway I was poured as usual, into an omnibus-cup at Thirty-first street; and (needing sweetening, of course, before going down the dainty throat of Broadway), I stopped at charming Mrs. —'s up town, to abate my country flavor by a lump or two of undiluted news. With the bridal reception of the day before, I found that our fastidious friend's mind was mainly occupied. The bride was a daughter of one of those eccentric and dashing sisters, who, with infallible supremacy of taste and dress, aided by the finest of figures and the darkest of eyes, fairly "walked the course" of New York fashion for a decade of years gone by, defiant alike of control and competition. Oddly enough, the bride and her bridesmaids—a lovely constellation of young creatures, whose dresses were both faultlessly stylish and elegantly worn—were entirely eclipsed in interest by the *toilette* of the widowed aunt, whom we all remember as the absolute Empress of Saratoga a quarter of a century ago. In the dazzling crowd of up-town beauties she, yesterday, stood alone. The startling novelty, and, at the same time, absolute suitableness of her dress, was the general wonder. I cannot give you, without risk of incorrectness, at second hand, a report of its materials; but our friend describes it as a most bewitchingly becoming combination of bridal

whiteness and of widow's weeds, such as had never before been conceived possible. With stately *physique*, still of magnificent fullness and proportion, and with eyes as lambently Vesuvian as when the wild bloods of the South were her enthusiastically unanimous subjects, tall and beautiful, once more, stood the widow! It was a *renaissance*, like a long-set star mounting backward to its place again; and, for our land of ephemeral and speedily forgotten beauty, a refreshingly startling phenomenon.

So discoursed to me, in reply to my question for up-town news, the lips that are my Oracle of Taste in town.

On my way down town, I looked out of the west window of the omnibus, as usual—happy indeed to see two miles of belles and beaux for so little money! What a sixpence-worth from Union Square to the Battery! The sidewalks, of course, were religiously clean—even the tobacco-juice wiped with pious penance from the pavement, by the sacred inside hem of the garments of lovely sinners (thus making public confession?) It was the middle of the afternoon and Broadway was florescent, as daily at that hour. The dandies, I observed, wore vanishingly narrow collars to their coats (the newest tailor-contrived novelty to compel them to get new ones), and (would you believe it?) that time honored antiquity, a linen shirt-collar, has become unfashionable; something in its place of which I

could not make out the texture, a sort of upright edge of dull white buckram or crinoline, now performs the shirt-collar's office (outer demonstration of the cleanliness beneath)—worn, however, down low on the thoracic glands instead of high upon the jaw (probably so as not to come in contact with the oil upon the beard), and, by the lift and freedom thus given to the head, a fashion that chances to be artistic. Beards are worn with a prairie freedom of law or limit—every man, apparently, bent on knowing into what sort of a walking wilderness he would naturally run riot. Fashionable promenade boots are made with patches on the toes! The sleeve holes of all manner of coats are now spaciously large—a ventilation of that hitherto tight-fitted angle of a gentleman, which will give general relief. Hats have become auto-biographic—the narrower the brim the younger a man proclaims himself to be.

And that is all I observed of novelty in my passing look at the promenaders of Broadway.

I was disappointed in the luxury I had allotted to myself for the evening. The promised opera was interrupted by the illness of the prima donna; and so my three hours of effortless recipiency—that deliciously reversed process to the day's weary givings-out of thought, talk and action—were to be otherwise disposed of. I looked at the paper. It must be some place where I could sit silent and idle, with the doors of heart and brain simply ajar. And the

best thing I could see advertised was "Mrs. Hatch at the Tabernacle."

First, with my brother, to eat a German dinner at Dietz's six o'clock table, however, and refresh our memory of the land of myth and music over a bottle of Stein-wein. And here again, by the way, is a luxury for overworked powers of attention. Every meat, every vegetable, every sauce or salad, is handed in turn to every guest. Of the well carved dish you are the easy chooser of the part you prefer. There is no studying of *carte*, no telescoping of far-away desirables, no watching or compelling of willful waiters. Things come with Christian leisure and courteous certainty of procession. And the strange "*faderland*" cooking! Why, it is to the sameness-worn palate what foreign travel is to drudgery of mind. Dietz is a master in his art, and luxurious foreigners fondly frequent his epicurean table. If necessary, one would encounter difficulties and dark corners to find what he offers. But, with his present sumptuous location in the "Prescott House"—princely architecture and costly elaborateness of splendor all around—the delicious dinner is indeed a dollar's-worth that speaks well for this life and its opportunities.

Mrs. Hatch was introduced to the audience a few minutes after we took our seats in a pew of the Tabernacle—a delicate-featured blonde, of seventeen or eighteen, with

flaxen ringlets falling over her shoulders, movements deliberate and self-possessed, voice calm and deep, and eyes and fingers no way nervous. The subject being given to her by a gentleman in the crowd ("whether man is a part of God"), she commenced with a prayer—and very curious it was, to see a long-haired young woman standing alone in the pulpit, her face turned upward, her delicate bare arms raised in a clergyman's attitude of devotion, and a church-full of people listening attentively while she prayed ! A passage in the Bible occurred to me :

[Let your women keep silence in the churches ; for it is not permitted unto them to speak.

And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home : for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.]—  
CORINTHIANS xiv. 34, 35.

But my instinctive feeling, I must own, made no objection to the propriety of the performance. The tone and manner were of an absolute sincerity of devoutness which compelled respect ; and, before she closed, I was prepared to believe her an exception—either that a male spirit was speaking through her lips, or that the relative position of the sexes is not the same as in the days of St. Paul. How was it with the Corinthians ? Women are certainly better than we, in these latter days, and, as standing far nearer to God, may properly speak for us, even in holy places—or so it seemed to me while listening to Mrs. Hatch.

Upon the platform, in the rear of the pulpit, sat three reporters; and the daily papers have given outlines of the argument between the fair "medium" and an antagonistic clergyman who was present. No report can give any fair idea of the "spirit presence," however—I mean, of the self-possessed dignity, clearness, promptness, and undeniable superiority of the female reasoner. Believe what you will of Mrs. Hatch's source of inspiration—whether she speaks her own thoughts or those of other spirits—it is as nearly supernatural eloquence as the most hesitating faith could reasonably require. I am, perhaps, from long study and practice, as good a judge of fitness in the use of language as most men; and, in a full hour of close attention, I could detect no word that could be altered for the better—none, indeed (and this surprised me still more), which was not used with strict fidelity to its *derivative* meaning. The practised scholarship which this last point usually requires, and the curiously unhesitating and confident fluency with which the beautiful language was delivered, was (critically) wonderful. It would have astonished me, in an extempore speech by the most accomplished orator in the world.

The argument was long, and, on the clergyman's part, a warm and sarcastic one. The reverend gentleman (what is commonly described as a "smart man," with high health, a remarkably large and high forehead, and a lawyer's subtlety of logic), alternated speeches with the

"medium," for an hour and a half—leaving the audience, I thought, unanimously on the lady's side. But, what was very curious and amusing, was the difference of scope and dignity in the operation of the two minds. *She* looked at the subject through an open window, and *he* through a key-hole. *She* was severe, by the courage, skill and calm good temper with which she met his objections in the full face of their meaning only, disregarding their sneers; and *he* was severe, by twisting her words into constructions not intended, and by feathering the sarcasms thereupon with religious commonplaces. Instead of the sonorous obscurity and rhapsody of which the spiritualists are commonly accused, her argument was the directest and coolest possible specimen (my brother and I thought) of fair and clear reasoning.

If you recollect our conversations on this subject, my experience in spiritualism has been always unsatisfactory. The "Fox girls" and others have tried their spells upon me in vain. It has seemed to me that I was one of those to whom was not "given" (as the Bible says) "the discerning of spirits." But it would be very bigoted and blind not to see and acknowledge the wonderful intellectual demonstration made by Mrs. Hatch; and *how to explain it*, with her age, habits and education, is the true point at issue. I think we should at least look at it seriously—if only in obedience to the Scripture exhortation which closes the

chapter on this very subject :—" Covet earnestly the best gifts."

We do not hear from you, my dear invalid—at least, not since the lightning mail told us of your departure for Florida. You are up to the knees in flowers, probably, and I (on this twenty-first of April) am up to the knees in snow! The month of buds, blossoms, and violets is the year's volume turned back to mid-winter. Summer yourself enough for us both, dear Morris, and come back with June in your warm eyes, to

Yours, cold or warm.

## LETTER XXXI.

Starting of the Summer Boat on the Hudson—Forbidding a Neighbor the Premises—Caprices of Climate, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *May.*

WHILE I have been nibbing my pen for this letter, the graceful Alida has glided across the squares of my window-pane—the first voyage down, of our daily steamer for the summer. Do you suppose you can imagine *the event* this is, in our Highland neighborhood? The bell, ringing at this moment, with the first approach of the beautiful boat to our Cornwall landing, says a great number of pleasant things to every ear that hears it. Broadway has very little idea of the charming tales told of it, by those silvery echoes! Operas, pictures, toys, equipages—wondrous dresses with ladies in them, and wondrous beards with men walking behind—omnibuses in such blissful readiness and shops with such enchanting looks of welcome—new kinds of children beautifully dressed, strange fruits, dazzling flowers, wonderful dogs and all manner of foreigners and frights and funny faces—the world that New York is, and all brought suddenly within ferry-reach by the starting of the Alida! Why, the taking down of the poor man's cot-

tage wall and letting it open into a palace—as the fairies do, in the old story-books—was but small magic to the Alida's opening the south side of the Highlands into New York.

May is full of those *wonders for one*—exquisite beauties of the coyly awaking spring which you must not only be alone to see perfectly, but in which you can interest no second person by description. Nature's exclusiveness seems to be enforced by this compulsory silence. Her sweetest charms are forbidden to profaning literature and kept for eye-witnesses only. Our glen, just now, offers many of these *têtes-à-têtes* with nature—lovely temptations for solitary climb and ramble. And, by the way, the mocking-birds are in unusual abundance this spring; and they, too—as they never sing twice alike—are singers for one or few. I drew bridle and listened for ten minutes to a song, yesterday, by a little brown troubadour on one of our trees, and it was wonderfully like an imitation of the same thing by Grisi, which I once heard at a merry supper of opera-singers in London. It takes the highest art to complete the circle and come round to nature—in most things.

And, apropos of exclusiveness, I have been compelled, for the first time, to an exercise of this unpopular quality—driven, very unwillingly, to forbid my premises to a neighbor. In self-justification, I must record the circumstances,

I believe, for the act was a violation of my favorite principle—social crystallization. Instinct and preference should be the only society fences around us. But Uncle Ben Smith was “borne with” a great while—as my simple story, I trust, will justificatorily show.

The old man was a favorite of mine. He had been “smart,” before epilepsy staggered his reason, and in all his talk, as we daily exchanged gossip on the road, there was a quaint habit of pitiless directness that was amusingly unpoetical and corrective. He had a daily tramp of two or three miles after “the cow,” that picked up her living on the highway, and as I generally knew which way she had gone, getting sight of her in my roundabout ride through the green lanes, I was a sort of neighborly sign-post, saving him many a trudge. We always stopped to chat, and I seldom came home without one of Uncle Ben’s facts “broken short off,” to amuse the table with. The greater part of his day was employed in a sort of half conscious and habitual picking up of sticks along the roads and riverside, laying them into bundles till he could come with a string and carry home a load on his back. Finding him peeling the chestnut posts of one of my fences, one day, for the small profit of the bark, I asked him why he did not go up the brook, where the drift wood was plenty.

“Glad enough, if the boss says so,” said Uncle Ben, looking up inquiringly.

So "the boss" gave him a welcome to free range through the meadows and all the brush and sticks he could pick up along the brook and in the woods—adding the promise that his loads should be taken home for him in a wagon.

But the meadow, as I look down upon it, two hundred feet from my study window, is one of the household pictures ; and, in two or three days, I began to discover that its beautiful evergreens and shrubs were, somehow, getting to look very unsightly. In dread of a mysterious blight, such as nearly exterminated the sycamores a few years ago, I went down to take a closer look. The cypresses and hemlocks were full of dead wood ! By the way of drying his sticks, or indicating that they were appropriated, Uncle Ben had stuffed them in among the close foliage of these low-branched evergreens, and there was scarce one of those beautiful cones and pyramids that did not look rotten at the base. They were heaps of fire-wood with the green of the weighed-down branches scarce perceptible ! The old man's mind being quite gone except upon very habitual subjects, it was very hard to convince him that this was wrong ; but, though he forgot my scolding, and persisted in loading down the evergreens, I still left him the range of the premises.

With our three gates opening upon different directions of road, I had not chanced to go out through the meadow

for several days, when, as I wound down through the ravine, one afternoon, several glaring white spots caught my eye, new features altogether in the familiar landscape. As I got nearer the horror revealed itself. A half dozen old stumps which had been scarce observable on the other side of the brook—unsightly objects originally, but toned down by the embrowning of age and the partial covering with moss and creepers—now stood in staring horror, monsters of raw-colored beheadedness, and skinned into the bargain. Uncle Ben had brought his axe and *peeled them, all round*, for the dry wood outside! Why, the meadow and hillside were made suddenly horrible! To eradicate the stumps wholly would be a herculean job, and a part of them must be still left, as young trees had started from the same roots. What friendship, that was not wholly sainted, could stand such a trial? But still I did not altogether break with Uncle Ben.

A month or so, and we exchanged greetings as usual, but I was far from supposing the old man to be the author of another trouble of mine. The tips of the branches of a beautiful clump of hemlocks, near one of the gates, were constantly broken off and strewn upon the ground—an objectless barbarism which I took to be wholly mischievous, and for which I had looked savage at various boys seen loitering thereabouts. But Uncle Ben was the culprit. And what do you suppose was his virtuous object?

Caught in the act, he said he was "only going to clean the mud off his shoes"—he "didn't know such good-for-nothing brush was of any consequence, anyhow"—but "it was muddy weather, and the boss was awful neat and particular about his gravel-walks, and he thought he'd better wipe his shoes before he came in! So there were the raw stumps of a hundred broken branches that had been used for shoe-brushes—an effect, like three-days' beard, in the first object which caught the visitor's eye on entering the gate—and my own "awful neatness" the avowed occasion for it! I could stand it no longer.

Still, I feel a kind of half reproach when I see Uncle Ben hobbling along the road and looking wistfully over the wall. With his imperfect memory he does not half comprehend the reason why he is "never to put foot inside that gate again," and of course I seem to him tyrannical and uncharitable. I must make it up to him some other way—but his disjointed mind will never put the two things together. I am sorry any man should be going so soon to Heaven with a wrong impression of me. But I trust I shall be forgiven, for my thus-explained first sin of exclusiveness, by the other neighbors.

My letter, thus far written, has lain by, for two or three days, and now—May the ninth—there is snow on the hills opposite. What caprices of climate! The streams are all swollen with a flood, however, and the deep-down springs

that have so long wanted it, are as happy as the hills are uncomfortable. The frost-nipped trees will get compensated at the roots. So goes Nature's distributive alternation! Complain of no unhappiness, my dear Morris, *if it is your turn!*

Yours ever.

## LETTER XXXII.

Prodigality of Spring—Blight of Evergreens—Pleasure of living in the country  
—Hog Liberty, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *June.*

I AM ashamed of my want of faith in the prodigalities of nature. The last year's droughts, unredeemed by corresponding deluges as yet, are smothered out of sight and sign by the overburdening leaf stacks of this second week of June—the woods dark as cathedrals and the shadows falling like thunder clouds under every tree. God be praised for a Providence altogether immeasurable! The sense of a limit to “the hollow of his hand”—blindness only though it was, to foresee it in the dispensation of The Seasons—shuts the soul in like a wall.

Yet the quantity of dead wood, now buried up in this overwhelmingness of foliage, was a majority of the held-up hands out-of-doors. Through April and May, I believed it would take years for our groves and woods to recover from the simoon that had passed over them. The dry sticks, and withered tops and branches, alone caught the eye. Particular kinds of trees, the sycamore and the

flat cedar especially, are nearly annihilated, as it is. It would make you melancholy to walk around Downing's sacred home, and see the once imperviously inclosing wall of this latter tree, blasted as if by a plague. But the hemlocks have put on their gold thimbles with the profuseness of the first glow of a sunset, and the nut-trees are beyond all squirrel-prophecy of famine; I venture to say—the tulip-trees out-flowering any remembered precedent, and the beeches and maples and oaks joyously overladen. You are to be pitied that your bricks in the city have no June!

Amid all this sumptuousness of fulfilment on the part of nature, however, I have been vexed beyond endurance, to-day, by the lag of civilization around us. The neighborhood has an incorrigible barbarism. I must write about it—for, after three years of patience, I have suffered as much from it to day as ever before, and a protesting pen may possibly do some good besides being an escape-valve of temper. Most reforms have been first written about.

As a general thing (to premise a little) I do not regret having been born in the present age. There will be pleasant people and things in the next century, no doubt—well worth waiting for, if one's birth had chanced to be put off. But the nineteenth century is very fair, and I am content, for instance, with the prospect of rotting in your charming company, my dear Morris! There is only one thing which, at Idlewild, makes me feel born rather too early.

Civilization has a barbarism still to outlive in this neighborhood, and, for the sake of being subsequent to that (if I had been consulted), I should probably have expressed a desire to have it postponed. *Hogs, here, still run loose.* The law forbids it, but public opinion has not yet overtaken the law.

One more preliminary remark, to prevent an inference that would fall unjustly, if by "public opinion" I were supposed to mean only the opinion of the poor. It is my wealthiest and most exemplarily Christian neighbor, of whose habitually stray sow I have a story to tell. That fact is the stumbling block to the whole progress of civilization on the subject. It is pointed to at once, by every poor man hereabouts, as a justification and example to his humbler pig. Friend S. is our acknowledged best Christian and most lovable and benevolent neighbor. Honor and blessing follow his white locks wherever he goes. But, of his eighty-two years, seventy-six have passed in unquestioning toleration of hog liberty. It is too late to persuade him, now, that the birds are not to fly through the air nor his sow to have the freedom of the highway. Show him the print of the animal's back on your new-painted gate, and he says "poor thing! it itched!" or, if you remonstrate, he kindly yields to your prejudice, and promises to shut her up—but she is out again, in a day or two, all the same. It seemed cruel to him to confine her, and he

hoped you had forgotten your whim, and she mightn't run that way again. Hogs, too, had been permitted to have the freedom of that road when George Washington rode over it, and with his own cherished memories of daily meeting the two, how could he be harsh upon the survivor?

And, by this historic stronghold of sow liberty I should feel effectually Sebastopoled, but that the memory of Napoleon comes to my aid. A week ago my friend Monell, of Newburgh, had given me a slip of weeping willow, grown from a branch of the one which hangs over the tomb of the Emperor at St. Helena. (Monell was one of Downing's intimate friends, and the tree was one of that admirable man's most cherished horticultural treasures.) To preserve this was a point of tender interest with me, and I had chosen for its sanctuary the moist bosom of a wooded dell, opening up from the meadow and clumped otherwise most beautifully and appropriately with cedars. It had never occurred to me to so dispose the plant that it would not lie in the natural path of a sow under pressure of pursuit—but such was its destiny. As I rode down the glen this morning, I spied the snouted invader rooting busily in the velvet sward of the meadow—a kind of damage, where floods overflow, particularly irreparable and unsightly. My first impulse was to drive her into the highway: and without stopping to open the gate (Friend S.'s particular sow being a cross of the caterpillar, and crawl-

ing over a wall in preference to going out by any gate you can open,) I put spurs and gave chase. Sir Archy was the faster animal of the two ; and, after being jumped over and trodden down several times in the open meadow, the hard-run sow took to the thicket on the hill-side, leaving me to ride around and head her off by the carriage-road above. And with the first stone thrown from the terrace, she took the groove of the hollow at a walloping trot and tumble, wiping her milky way over the prostrated willow, and stripping the new buds from its delicate stem as neatly as a wiper with a patent corn-sheller ! Now what think you of an age in which the most cherished friendship can keep that sow to forgive ? I must frankly own, that, with all my affectionate admiration for Friend S——, I could better enjoy an epoch that had outlived his views on the subject. God bless the old man—but, for his sow, *vice versa* !

I fear I should not send my letter if I were to give it a morning's re-perusal, my dear Morris—this country life and my troublesome cough making it hard to say prayers over even a stray pig unforgiven—and I will sign and seal while I can, with my wrath and the candle both burning. Good night.

Yours always.

## LETTER XXXIII.

Discovery of a New Spring—Employment for Idle Day—Digging out a Hanging Rock—A Discovery—A Visit, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD.

WE have discovered so many new poets and poetesses in our time—founts of Helicon that have run for the world's refreshment thenceforward, by their own natural hydraulic pressure—that it will, perhaps, be a pleasant variety to our readers if I chronicle a first drink at a Grace Greenwood of Nature's own—a bright, cool, sparkling spring, which burst its unforetold and unexpected way to light under my pioneering spade and pickaxe, ten days ago. You remember my playing of truant—succumbing to the inveiglements of a June morning—with an inkstand and a Monday's task left beckoning in vain. I found the new treasure, the pure new spring, that day—a reward of idleness which is so certain, in some shape, for me, that I began to think “the Leviathan” and I have the same errand in life, made only, as the Psalmist says, “to take pastime therein.”

*Head* idleness, of course, must have some little job for the *hands*. The brains will not let their own tools alone,

unless to look on while the duller faculties do something with theirs—a scholar's necessity, for which a country life comes charmingly into play. There is always some pleasant work on hand, a blemish to remove, a path to clear or a wild beauty to develop or heighten. My prominent enterprise for the moment was the clearance of an almost impenetrable dell, which had been the rubbish hole and stump-pit of our glen from time immemorial; and thither, with Bell and Robert, and the axes and pickaxes, I turned a joyous face for that forenoon of summer idleness.

You may have noticed, in descending the winding road through the ravine, that a superb clump of hemlocks rests like a bunch of emeralds on the breast of the opposite hill. You could not see, however, that, in behind their trunks, held like a bowling-ball in the player's hand, rests one of those hanging rocks ("boulder-stones," the geologists call them) which show, by their rounded edges, that they have travelled; and which are strangers to the strata around, though they made their stop where they are, probably, on the last day of the deluge. In Idlewild glen there are four of these—each one large enough for a cathedral dome; and two of them, indeed, so architecturally upheld and roofed over by columns of large trees that they have always seemed to me like dark cathedral chapels with pulpits of stone. It was the largest of these chapels of whose floor and galleries we were to make a clearing. The sustained

rock projects far out from the side-hill, and we had often sat under the rock itself, with its dark roof of hemlocks, looking down on the small lake below; but, around and behind, was an impenetrable thicket of logs and tangle-wood, in which, as we have always supposed, the foxes and possums, skunks, rabbits and wild-cats, had their original and respected shelter.

To chop out the logs, and, by rolling them upon the brush we had first heaped in, to make some sort of footing in the swampy lap of the hollow, was the work of my two men for the day. The digging into the upper bank, as we began to do, towards evening, for gravel to cover this, brought us upon our discovery. Running my hoe into a sort of grotto which wound away out of sight under some roots at the level of my head, I noticed that I had suddenly made a channel for a stream of bright pure water. I caught a handful of it, and my exclamation of its excessive coldness brought up Bell, who peeled a hemlock twig, fixed a spout at the outlet, and took a drink—pronouncing it at once (with one of his expressions of private emphasis), the best spring within twenty miles. It was a crystalline, ready-ised stream, running out over clean white gravel, and with about the steady abundance of a Croton faucet. Its elevation, forty or fifty feet above the brook, suits it for the action of the hydraulic ram, and, to the lovely home that must some day be built, opposite Idlewild, on the

promontory above, it will doubtless be the prized messenger of daily health and luxury.

At present we should have a fairy child to baptize—for never was there sylvan chapel, with roof, pulpit and baptismal font more wildly beautiful. It overhangs our little lake and its shore of drip-rock and wooded cliffs—a three-sided grotto opening to the south—and, though somewhat muddy and dirty now, in another year it will be carpeted with moss, and draped with water-plants and vines, worthy of druid consecration. It is the nature of new-found springs to strengthen with flowing and coming to light; and this, by its icy coldness, comes from deep-down, where earth is constant. It will run many a day after its first finder is forgotten—but it will be among two or three spots which I shall wish to revisit again, remembered there or not; and please think of me, when you drink at this chapel-spring, by and by, with the chance of my being there to be pleased.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Receive my felicitations at your being present at this point of eternity. June, as we have it to-day, is a luxury in which the yet unborn (among whom you might have been kept waiting, you know) have a decided loss. Everything is alive with fragrance, beauty and music—everything happy that can isolate itself in *to-day* and forget *yesterdays* and *to-morrows*. Nature is a little behind the

time, I think, in "not advertising." It was by merest accident I discovered that one of her finest performances came off in our ravine, last night—a freshet and a full moon coming together, accompanied by such an atmosphere, for temperature, transparency and fragrancy, as is only "turned on" (like the roof gas at the Academy) for "star benefits." It was too beautiful a night to go to bed; and I had strolled down into the ravine, led insensibly by the roar of the torrent and thinking more of other matters than of finding anything particular going on, when, suddenly, I stood motionless with astonishment. I had stepped out of the darkness of the woods into an illumination. The turn of the path had brought me to the edge of the precipice overlooking the cascades, and, with the thunder-storms we had been having all day, the stream was swollen to a cataract—a cataract, apparently, of burning silver. It was close upon midnight, and the nearly full moon chanced to be directly over the ravine, the almost vertical rays throwing the overhanging precipices into shadow, and thus (curiously enough) *illuminating only the stream*. It was a thunder-torrent of gleaming and molten light breaking its way down through crowding darkness. In my whole life, I had really seen no sight more sublime. After standing a moment or two on the foot-bridge overhanging the cascades, I hurried home and got my people out of their beds, stumbled back through the woods with the little

slippered feet making their astonished way after me, and—the performance had its proper audience! My wife and daughter could hardly be got home again, so fascinated were they with the strange splendor of the spectacle. As they stood on the slender bridge with their white dresses and kerchiefed heads, I scrambled down the cliffs below, and saw them, high up between me and the moon, half draped in the clouds of silvery mist—sprite-like figures in a picture of certainly most wonderful beauty. I shall never forget it. But you see how easily we might have gone to bed, never suspecting the wonders so near by.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The commonest incident of life is romantic enough, if truly told,” says some great writer, and, with this encouragement, I think I will describe a call that I had yesterday, from a fair stranger, at Idlewild. I can thus embody, also, a request of the lady that I would name a little want of hers, in print. It is pleasant, in this indolent weather, to make even the slight labor of the pen serve two purposes.

Some weeks ago (to preface a word or two) I had received a letter expressing a wish which was too natural and simple not to be rather extraordinary, and which, therefore, I did not exactly see the way to fully realize. The writer described herself, in very graceful language, as a lady residing in the very depths of the country; but she had become enamored of the two of her own sex who had

shone so brilliantly in the columns of the *Home Journal* ("La Penserosa" and "La Moqueuse"), and wished to propose to one of them the opening of a private and confidential exchange of sister minds—rural enthusiasms for city experiences. Certain that it would be very useless to propose, to either of the gifted ladies in question, the undertaking of confidential reciprocities with an unknown of whom I could tell so little, I laid aside the well-expressed and daintily written letter—intending to answer it when I should find the leisure, or to hand it personally to the admired "La Penserosa," when she should visit us in June.

It was with this little mystery in the egg that I received, yesterday, what I took to be one of the ordinary and daily visits of strangers to Idlewild—a gentleman sending in his card after rambling through the glen, and wishing to express his pleasure in the scenery, with the usual polite acknowledgment of membership in our literary parish. He was a young physician of twenty-five or thirty, and accompanied by a lady, whom I incidentally discovered, after a few minutes' conversation, to be a bride of three days—a revelation which brought a very attractive blush into a very lovely face; though indeed, I had already recognized, by the indescribable betrayal which nature breathes through the mere presence of the work she is proud of, that it was beauty even better tenanted than

built. There was a charming mind looking out of the windows of those large brown eyes.

And this proved to be my unknown applicant for a correspondence with a sister-spirit. And she still expressed herself with timid perseverance in the request.

I ventured to suggest, with a glance at the good-looking and gentlemanly young doctor, who listened with bridegroom unobjectingness, that, with her new duties, she might not continue to find the electricity to spare; but she seemed to have anticipated no such economy of a heart she probably felt to be overcharged, and the warmth for a friendship that would enlarge her knowledge, she thought, would never be missed. She was quite ready to date from the honeymoon with her first letter; and, if I could not otherwise find the metropolized sister-spirit, perhaps the *mention of the want in print* might vibrate upon some hidden chord in tune.

I thus lay the matter before the ladies. My word for it, simply, that the applicant is of nature's rarity of choice work—a violet of the wild-wood wishing to exchange fragrance with a japonica of the green-house. A letter inclosed to me, addressed—say “Violet”—will be duly forwarded to her, and, therefore, the sister flowers can exchange real addresses, if mutually content, and carry on the correspondence at their own pleasure and discretion.

My history of a morning call is not very eventful, dear Morris, but it is, at least, true. And then, though simple to read of, it is new to follow up and think of. High-spiced fiction, besides, may be needing the relish of plainer liet, just now. So be content.

Yours.

## LETTER XXXIV.

Answer to many Inquiries—Corroboration of Experience—Mental Effect of Horseback-Riding—Unstability of a Stable—Exercise with or without Fatigue—Insufficiency of Pedestrian Exercise—Philosophy of Uses of a Horse—Importance of the Use of a Saddle-Horse to Old Age—How much it affects Brain-work in all Professions—Advice to Convalescents, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *January.*

THIS letter may be made to discharge two errands—(a favorite double-barrel-ism in my *e-pistol*-ary practice, if you have chanced to observe)—in the first place, explaining to you why you are receiving less “copy” than usual from my faithful pen ; and, in the second place, answering the questions of numerous correspondents, on a subject upon which my previous hints have proved more suggestive than was anticipated. In addition to the methods of best aiding the physician in combating with diseases of the lungs, I find there is a curiosity as to the *means of sustaining and reinforcing convalescence*. The invalids among our readers form so large a class (in this country of overwork and hurry, where health is so culpably neglected), that, even at the risk of reputation, I will enlarge a little upon the points which have particularly stirred inquiry. First, let me give a portion of a letter I have just received, which corroboro-

rates an important *further reach* in my own experience. A gentleman writes me from New York :

" While entering an extract from that valuable work, 'Helps,' in my commonplace-book, the other day, it occurred to me that it was a valuable extension of your own remark on the same subject. You may remember, that, in the *Home Journal* of January 17, 1857, you suggested the importance of '*exercise, with the legs of a horse to do the work.*' The *physical* advantage of this was the main burden of your argument. But the extract from 'Helps' advocates its *effect upon the mind.* He says :

" 'It is difficult for a man, unless he is a perfect horseman, to think connectedly during a ride; which is the very reason why horse-exercise is so good for the studious and busy; but the inspiring nature of the exercise may still enable the rider to overcome special points of difficulty in any subject he is thinking over. There is all the difference between the thoughts of a man who is plodding homewards on his own legs under an umbrella, and those of the same man who on horseback is springing over the elastic turf, careless whether wind or rain drives against him or not, that there was between the after-dinner and the next morning counsels of the ancient Germans.' "

Now, to show how exactly this tallies with my own recent experience, may not be uninstructive.

For the last two or three weeks, by a concurrence of events in the stable (that most *unstable* department of a man's household) I have been reduced to my own legs;

feeling, probably, with the difference of locomotion with or without a horse under me, very much as Satan did when deprived of legs and wings by the mandate, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go." My one good horse and my two poor ones gave out together. With a "thrush in his foot," I was obliged to send the Black Prince to our friend Disbrow, who kindly offered to cure and exercise him on the tan-bark floor of his riding-school; Lady Jane is so far advanced in her family *wax* that she is only useful in the family *wain*; and old Sir Archy's knees, being "past praying for," have so taken to praying for themselves, that (with this frozen ground and its sharp points to stumble over and fall upon) the mounting of him insures you at least two knee-pans of mince piety.

For the one un-omit-able necessity of convalescence, therefore—*the perspirative conquest over the open air once a day*—I am reduced to the exertion of my own muscles. I am obliged to *walk* myself into a perspiration, instead of *riding* into one. And, may I be excused if I explain the difference with some particularity?

Medical books tell us (as I have already quoted) that pedestrianism pulls upon those forces of the loins and the spine which directly sustain the brain; and that is the kind of exercise, therefore, which the weary intellectual laborer can least afford. But, besides the sparing of the muscles of the back and the spinal marrow, there are

others of less tangible "let-ups," which are still more necessary for mental relaxation, and to all of which pedestrianism is, to say the least, very unfavorable. First, the mind should be unhitched from the particular subject, of the burden of which it is weary. Second, the will should be unpivoted, so that it is no longer called upon for continued effort. Third, the scenery, or surrounding objects, should be changed in sufficiently quick succession to captivate and employ the eye. And, fourth, the animal spirit should be enlivened, by some natural, healthful and easy exhilaration.

In the reading of the last paragraph, the reader of course has been mentally running a parallel between the two kinds of exercise. It is, in fact, a correct list, both of the disadvantages of *walking* and the advantages of *riding*. The loins and spine are the portions of the frame least called upon for exertion when a man is on horseback. The entire contrast of motion and occupation, with the act of mounting, changes at once the character and current of the thoughts. As the horse does the work, and his legs go on, whether they are remembered at every step or not, it is no continued exercise of the rider's will to keep moving. With four times as great velocity, and going four times as far, the eye, during the ride, is an effortless kaleidoscope, amusing the tired brain in spite of itself. Then, who that has ever ridden sufficiently to identify him-

self with a horse—what man who can assume at will the consciousness of a centaur—need be told of the exhilaration of feeling that his natural strength and swiftness are ten times multiplied?

And I may (or may not, according to who is the reader just now), be called imaginative for another value that I long ago discovered in the possession of a horse—a value which cannot be realized by riding in a carriage, or by any other conveyance than the daily bestriding of the animal and so incorporating him with the habitual consciousness of personal motion. I refer to *the amount of space which constitutes one's occupancy of the face of the earth*. To him who walks but two miles a day and back again, the room he inhabits on this planet is an orbit with a radius of two miles. To him who rides five or ten miles a day and back again, it is an orbit with a radius of five or ten miles. I insist upon it, that the instinct of breadth or extent in a man's share of the world, and consequently, in some degree, his sense of the dignity and capacity of his existence, is in proportion to this difference in his personal habits. It may help to excuse my second mention of this equestrian philosophy, if I suggest another and graver advantage in the same habit, viz.—the supply it is to the failing strength and activity of *old age*, and the invigorating countercheck which it maintains to that narrowing of the circle of life and that feeling of desertedness which comes with lessened

converse and observation. "The old gentleman's cob," as it is called—a stout, gentle and sure-footed roadster brought every morning to the door—is an essential portion of the daily consciousness and enjoyment of every venerable grandsire among the parks and manor-houses of England.

To return to my present tribulation, however, for the sake of contributing its painful and actual experience to the ever valuable data of science!

With no horse to ride, my daily exercise, of course, has been taken on foot; but, this, I find, besides the demeaning effect of its heavy shoeing, muddiness and drudgery, and besides its lack of proper shaking up for that jaundice-box which is called the liver, is *so fatiguing* as to deprive me of one of the most valuable portions of my literary day. The far better exercise of the saddle—that healthful inward agitation of the vital organs, expansion of chest and lungs, and lively distribution of the heat and juices of the system—is done, on the contrary, not only without fatigue, but with actual refreshing and strengthening. Returning from my afternoon ride, usually at dusk, I have three hours—from five to eight o'clock—of the most enjoyable and efficient use of my mental powers. You can fancy what an addition, to each day's morning work, is this evening session! But, after a long walk—when the labor of getting up a perspirative glow out of doors has been done by *my own* consciously weary legs and loins instead of the put-

away and forgotten ones of Lady Jane or the Black Prince —what a difference in my condition! I am incapable of mental effort altogether! Brain dulled and animal spirits deadened by fatigue, I am one-horse-power less of a man than I should otherwise be. And pray tell me whether this extra one-horse-power is not worth adding to the daily capacity of any man—lawyer, preacher, merchant or statesman, as well as author or editor? Is it not the most obvious economy (of the bodily and mental strength which constitutes the “stock in trade” of most men) to make a habit of horse-back riding?

On the lesser points of the art and mystery of convalescence—those which are matters of inquiry by the “consumptives” among our correspondents—I have nothing new to urge. Every man has his variety of diseases and of constitution, and, with the aid of a judicious physician, it is easy for him to become the absolute master of his own symptoms and their best treatment. An invalid may often, by judgment and self-control, enjoy a degree of “high condition,” of which few men with unshattered constitutions know the luxury. It is the sensation of the race-horse in high training, and with the nerves and susceptibilities made more delicate by disease. But, for this, a most systematic and unvarying *attention to trifles* is required. The stomach is to be controlled and watched like an experiment in chemistry. Exercise, sleep, perspiration, temper, cleanli-

ness, amusement, and a clear conscience, are to be perseveringly and unexceptionably looked to. And most of those who can never again be *carelessly well*, may live out quite their natural length of days, and with their full share of usefulness and enjoyment, by consenting to so attend to those trifles of self-government that they are always *carefully well*.

I have thus written you quite a chapter of dietetics—so grave a one, indeed, that any lighter gossip at the close would, I am sure, be out of tune. I will conclude with begging you (a convalescent, yourself), to ponder well the precepts herein inculcated, and to see also, in this letter, the reason of my industrial shortcomings, remembering that Black Prince, who usually does half my daily labor, is lame at Disbrow's, and that I am, therefore, only

Yours afoot.

## LETTER XXXV.

### ADVICE FOR INVALIDS, ETC.

IDLEWILD, *April.*

IF I write to you, this morning, with my pen held loosely in my fingers—very much as I should think aloud, if you occupied the other chair at this river-side window of my sick-room—it will not be a letter for all readers. I shall gossip to you of what floats uppermost in a brain at the ebb ; and, to those only who are invalids, with the tide of life run down for the moment, like mine, is this likely to be interesting. And how many are these ? Among our great multitude of friends and readers, are there invalids enough to be separately written for ? If I mistake in thinking so, it is an error upon which to thank Providence ; but, upon the somewhat sad possibility, I will at least take an invalid key for the tone of this present letter.

I see Spring—budding, flowering, leaf-starting and verdure brightening, in wondrous beauty out of doors—but, *without me!* I am left behind while this gay procession is gliding past. And this is a part of a conscious feeling which has lately given me a great deal of thought. The

*sense of isolation*, in sickness, seems to be such an inevitable law of our nature; and we are no less islanded, on our sick bed, because we are tenderly watched and kindly ministered to. It is across a gulf that they reach to us—they with whom we no longer sit down to eat, or go forth to walk, or converse carelessly and gaily. The mail comes in as usual with its news, but from a world with which my pulses are not in tune. The sun rises over familiar river and mountain that I cannot now visit—on roads that I cannot now travel—on well remembered labor and pleasure that I cannot now share. Children come in to see me, but not with their usual frolicsomeness and freedom. Their voices are subdued with a vague awe of the paler face and the invalid surroundings. Even the birds that fly past the window seem to have less thought of me than usual—building their nests for the summer just as well, though I am not out under the trees, as I was wont to be, guarding their innocent homes from the sportsman's gun and the boy's mischief. Of what I know as "the world," I am no longer a part—no longer necessary to its present day's doings and completeness.

And—strangely enough—there is no pain in this conscious dismemberment from the life around? As to the mere instinct, it is like undressing for sleep when weary—laying off the clothes, that, to wear with comfort, we must be strong and wakeful. But it is mainly for the *sore need*

of the mind, probably, that, by the wise Providence of God, with the probable approach of Death, comes the weaning from the world we are to leave. Upon the religious bearing of this provision of our nature—the being left alone with the heart within us that it may kneel in solitude to its Maker—I need not touch. It is a self preaching sermon from the text. But it is wonderful, also, how it makes easy and natural—as if no other pathway would do so well—the long-dreaded and dark steps downward—how it makes for the first time comprehensible and sweet, the strange words of the Preacher, in Ecclesiastes, that “the day of death is better than the day of one’s birth.” Something beyond, that is better than life, and to which the grave is the threshold, has been approached—recognized and felt, even though the sickness be but a coming near to Death’s gate from which we are once more to turn back. If only as a sweet memory with which to return to life and health, *the invalid’s isolation is a blessing.* It is like the mist of the departing day—separated from earth, but islanded in the sunset cloud which brightens as it sails away to be forgotten.

\*       \*       \*       \*

I have thought of suggesting to our very eloquent pastor, Mr. Wyatt, the preaching of a sermon on *the care of one’s own health as a religious responsibility.* Most human illnesses, no doubt, could, with timely and easy precautions,

have been avoided. Nature gives her warnings which we willfully disregard—"first symptoms," of which every one knows the import and the remedy. Is not this trifling with the health which is the most precious of God's temporal gifts? Nay, more; is it not an almost universal shortening of the lives that have been sacredly intrusted to us, and do we not thus—remotely and indirectly, but still in some positive degree—come under the same reprobation, as the suicide? Might it not, on this ground, be most usefully and properly numbered among *the child's moral lessons at school*, to pay a minute and ever watchful attention to health, as a duty no less to himself than to his God?

It may be instructive to invalids if I make confession how I am myself thus culpable—this recent illness being but the inevitable sequent of a neglected warning. I had been "moping" for a day or two when a slight engagement called me to New York. Instead of going to the city, I should have put myself on diet, doubled my exercise in the saddle, given my pen a holiday, and (with an alternation of *nux vomica* and *berberis*) gone early to bed. There are medicines, of course, which will defer sickness, temporary stimulants by which the laggard system is made to outrun disease for the moment; and, to these, I trusted for my three days of irregularities. Close upon this, however, followed a more imperative engagement which kept me three days longer in the city; and, redoubling my

drugs of procrastination, I kept up—to come home to the struggle with suppressed ailments which had meantime accumulated to a crisis. To pulmonary patients (of whom I have the honor to be, I believe, the convalescent oracle), this penalty for the disregard of first symptoms is especially a warning—the tendency of all fevers to inflammation of the lungs making it almost a certainty that the severest part of the attack will be upon the already weakened and most susceptible portion of the system.

*May 7th.*—I have been out, since the date of the foregoing (written propped up in bed, a week or ten days since), and there is one pleasure of convalescence which I felt rather more vividly than ever before, and which I will record as a suggestion to brother invalids; at the same time that it may be an added mite, perhaps, to the philosophy of human consciousness.

Like as it is, to the emergence from a chrysalis, to get abroad again after the confinement of a sick-room—the trees and fields seeming a beautiful world which we have lived in before in some different shape—there is yet, in the weakness of limbs and the faint unwillingness for exertion, a sense of not belonging as yet to what is around us. Our sluggish pulse does not keep time with the fresher and faster life of Nature out of doors.

It was with this feeling that I climbed, with some diffi-

culty, into the saddle, on one of the most lovely mornings of this inspiring adolescence of the year—a balmy forenoon of blooming and exulting May. I took the bridle in my hand, a feeble but admiring looker-on—grateful to God for only the privilege to inhale the intoxicating air, and be out where I could more nearly and realizingly marvel and adore. Once in my seat, however, and fairly loitered forth from the steep tangle of our hemlock woods, my familiar horse, to whose step and motion I was as much used as to the lifting of my own limbs, became a part of me again. I galloped off—*suddenly restored to the full consciousness of health and its vigor of movement.* It was as if the half of me only had been ill. With the natural incorporation of that daily-ridden animal into my identity—the invariable feeling, I believe, of the habitual rider—his limbs were as my own. I was like a centaur, whose head and lungs might have their human ailments, but whose body and legs under him would retain their brute speed and vigor—ready to be fleet and strong again at the first re-venturing forth of the rallying and predominating intellect.

Is not this a noteworthy hint of how to quicken the convalescent's retarded life? Is it not an addition to the phenomena of possible sensation—to be numbered with the first sense of swimming, or the aeronaut's half-consciousness of wings?

But, what a thrilling luxury was the hour-or-two abroad, on the fragrant and bright May morning! My first thought was to track again the five streams whose banks I follow oftenest in my home rambles—down Idlewild Brook to the Hudson; along the Moodna from its junction with the Hudson to Mortonyville Creek; up the wild bank of this precipitous stream to the turnpike; then by a mile of road through English scenery to Rock-ladder Brook, and down this lovely rivulet by the sweetest of green lanes till it brings me back again to the Moodna—a four-mile diagram of the picturesque, drawn by the running water of wholly different streams, and each with its valley of characteristic and peculiar beauty. It is the wealth of Idlewild that these four lesser water-nymphs (beside the queenly Hudson) dwell within reach of an hour's ramble from the gate; and I do not love them any the less poetically because they turn the water-wheels of flour-mills and factories instead of being haunted by fairies. They will be Wheeler-and-Wilsoned into their natural idleness of beauty in due time!

But what a well-bestowed law of Providence it is, that all things are not beautiful together! With the abundant waters of the early spring, these wild streams are now in their glory. To ride through the valleys with their foam and sparkle to look upon, we are scarce conscious how bare are the trees, how tardy are the belated blossoms, how coy the

wild-flowers. And it is as well, perhaps, to remind the stranger, who may ramble through these same wild roads in summer, that the shrubs and foliage, the vines and verdure, will be then taking *their* turn—our water-nymphs of April and May less lovely in their retirement and undress, and content to be outshone when less wanted. But, for the present, how inspiring they are ! What magnetizing music in their dance over the rocks—what electrifying of the blood in their swift sparkle—what inspiring of the dull heart in their bright scorn of hindrance, and in their turning all obstacles into beauty. I was sure that the horse under me felt the excitement of it, for, as the wild waters sprung dancing and prancing along the road-side, he moved his fine legs to the same merry tune, overflowing with spring spirits and keeping his more quiet paces for the languor of “leafy June.”

But this is dream-weaving, dear Morris ! Though we never tire of nature, others tire to hear us talk of it ; and I will close here my chance letter of thinkings-aloud. To the invalids, whom alone I have thought of as my readers, while writing it, I will send thanks for the pleasure I have had in opening my heart to them, and I remain

Yours as ever.

## LETTER XXXVI.

### EXPERIENCES OF FRIENDSHIPS, ETC.

IDLEWILD, *May*.

You have a rival in Torrey, our village blacksmith. Like yourself, he is my beloved friend, tried and trusted. But as he performs his kindly duties towards me on a different principle from yours—you denying me nothing, and Torrey resolutely refusing me everything which he thinks is “not best for me on the whole”—I have been led to look to the results, as facts which might help us to arrive at the true philosophy of the matter. Few questions in life are more important than Friendship and its duties. I shall not be considered tedious, I hope, if I record what few statistics I am sure of in my own personal experience, as a contribution to this branch of the Science of the Affections— premising, only, (as is but honest to the reader,) that *my preference is altogether for Morris-ism*. By long experience and to my consequently sweet and serious conviction, the absolute indulgence of a Willis's every-imagined wish —his whims, caprices, changes, contradictions and myster-

ies—"turns out best." On this side of the question, the imperishable hyphen between our two names is argument enough. My present object is to give confirmatory proof of the evils of the opposite principle—*Torrey-cism and its exceedingly risky consequences* being the theme of the following letter.

To fairly explain my stand-point in the argument—the aggravating extent of Torrey's well intentioned but obstinate resistance to my wishes—I must come to the confessional, for a moment.

For every hard-working man, I believe, it is necessary to have a foible. Nature demands it as an escape-valve—nothing being such a let-up to over-tasked wisdom and exemplariness as some habitual point upon which to be daily silly or unreasonable. To those who live with me, or in my immediate neighborhood, this confession is intelligible at a glance. I am irreproachably industrious—(that much I think, may be borrowed from my often prepared tombstone)—but the silly sensitiveness of which I wish to "make a clean breast," is not in my profession. What the critics may have found to disapprove never gave me a second thought, nor did I ever wish praised or spoken of, read or remembered, by friend, relative or neighbor, the pen-work so laboriously achieve. In fact, I do not believe that I should ever be thought of as an editor, either by my own family or in the three villages from which Idlewild is equi-

distant, if it were not for the never-ending inquiries of the way hither by a procession of young poets and poetesses seeking to be god-fathered, or the rise in the demand for building-lots, hereabouts, and the mention of the *Home Journal* by all the customers.

No—it is upon a more recent accomplishment than authorship that I am nervously susceptible. *Knowledge of horse*—his value and his paces, but especially his treatment and his ailments—is my weakness! Between my study and my stable I keep up the balance of existence—too faultlessly diligent (for the belief of posterity) in the one, if it were not for the time and temper obstinately wasted on the other. And I began my betrayal of this hobby with what the neighbors, here (particularly those who had horses to sell) called “nonsense;” though it was based upon the Bible. I had read in two books of the Old Testament, that King Solomon paid only seventy-five dollars apiece for his horses; and upon the strength of this twice-recorded example, I determined, that, for what animals a poor man like me could any way want, more could not properly be paid. I have contrived, hitherto—buying some cheaper and some dearer—that, of the eight or ten horses I have owned for the last five years, this should be

\* 1 Kings x. 29, and 2 Chronicles i. 17, it is recorded that Solomon paid, for each of his horses, brought out of Egypt, “one hundred and fifty shekels of silver”—a shekel (according to the Bible Dictionary), being equal in value to an English half crown, or fifty cents of our money.

the average cost ; though the Black Prince (the colt, of which I have the story to tell) was beyond Solomon considerably—balanced pretty fairly, however, by a twenty-three-dollar mare, which Lady Jane killed with a jealous kick on the third day of my owning her.

You will see, at once—remembering how the village blacksmith is not only the horse-doctor, but the judge and umpire of all questions as to the use, value and proper treatment of the animal—that Torrey's friendship occupies delicate ground ! He is little aware, in fact, when I drop in, every day or two, at his old tumble-down shanty, for a chat, how much my rather varied experience of the sweet hypocrisies of polite life is called upon, to preserve a placid smile while he hammers out his contradictions on that opinionated old anvil. We so strangely disagree, on my weak points ! From the six Agricultural Journals which I receive every Wednesday, I can always pick some beautiful new theory of horse knowledge ; and, crammed secretly with this, I lounge in, quite accidentally, to astonish Torrey with my superior wisdom. But though the only veterinary reading he has ever done in his life has been his forty years' experience, he invariably “ knows better.” I will suspend my principal narrative for a moment, to give a recent instance of this downright obstinacy.

In the “ New-England Farmer ” I had seen a suggestion that the inserting of a piece of sole-leather, between the

hoof and the shoe, would materially soften the shock of hard roads to a tender-footed horse, besides preventing the access of an occasional sharp stone to the unprotected hollow of the foot. Now, of my two bay Solomons (kept for farm-work, but, with a change of harness, drawing the family to church very equipagestically on Sunday), the "nigh one" has a set of legs that should long ago have been given over to the "unrecorded past." The poor old horse is "used up" without knowing it! All pluck, and with unwavering faith in the joints and muscles that have served him so long, he answers the chirrup, at starting, with a loftily arched neck (the beauty of which gave him his name of "Sir Archy"), and puts out his unreliable old fore-legs with the high and lively action of a colt undoubted. To meet him on the road, you would take him for a spirited young horse—while, the moment the harness is off, at the stable door, he goes hobbling off to his stall, like a gouty old gentleman crawling to bed without his crutches.

"The very thing for poor tender-footed Sir Archy!" I exclaimed, as I read of the protective shock-softener; and, in a very few minutes, he was on his way to the blacksmith, with orders that he should be entirely reshod, and express directions as to the leather soles, which were to be got at the harness-maker's on the other side of the street.

Of course, after dinner, the first thing was to go out to

the stable and have a look at the old steed in his soft moccasins. But—what was my astonishment! There he stood, in his new shoes, the edges all bright with the fresh filing and hammering, but no sign of the leather sole! I called for the stupid Irishman to give him a furious scolding about the orders which I took for granted he had Hibernianistically neglected to give to Torrey; but he anticipated the outbreak, hurrying out the explanation while I stood with trembling finger pointing to the shoes.

“ ’Twas no use, sir! He said he *wouldn’t do no such thing!* It would only dry up the inside of the old critter’s hoofs so that he couldn’t put foot to the ground!”

Between me and the blacksmith’s shop—a little over a mile—there was fortunately no electric wire; so I bottled up my anger till the next day, thinking I would drive the horse to the village myself and insist on the job being done. But, I slept upon it. In the cool light of the next morning, I thought it possible that Torrey might be right, and—submitted. And, with the reader’s mind thus somewhat prepared for a Torrey-cism, still more difficult to bear, I proceed with my narrative.

Between me and my friend the blacksmith there has been, for some time, a very irritating bone of contention—the treatment of a certain black colt, which I bought half broken, and which I piqued myself on keeping in the highest possible condition, while I trained him for perfection

under the saddle. I had a theory as to *the possibility of an animal's retaining always the completeness of his natural beauty*—the original type and model of the full-developed body and limbs carefully preserved. I did not believe that either man, woman, or horse must necessarily grow unsightly, during the fulfillment of its natural life, any more than the unshot bird, or the uncaught fish, or the unfallen fruit, or the unplucked flower. So, for that long summer, I looked faithfully to the grooming and feeding of the handsome creature, riding him every day, and getting credit from all the farmers around for having the best-conditioned and finest colt in the county. But *so thought not Torrey!* “Entirely over-fed!” “Young blood must be kept more down!” “Mash and carrots instead of all that grain!” “Flesh ain’t sound, I tell ye!” These were the aggravating phrases with which I was greeted, every time I rode up to the shop to have a nail filed down or a shoe looked to. And he wound up so provokingly, always, as he shoved back his old remnant of a straw hat from his needlessly high forehead, with that significant “*You’ll see!*”

But, in the autumn, my proud colt began to step lame. He flinched a little with the left fore-foot, and—of course—was to be taken to Torrey! And, the cool way in which that tall blacksmith backed his long body under the horse, hoisted the troubled foot between his knees, wrenched off the shoe and showed me the diseased crack

in the hoof, with a “ Didn’t I tell ye ? ” would have provoked a Palmerston ! There it was—bad blood finding a vent in a suppurating sore (which they commonly call a “ Thrush ”), and only to be cured with a six weeks’ purging and reducing—the fine creature to be made ill-looking and bony, in spite of all my systematic exercise and feeding !

As I have previously mentioned in the *Home Journal* (by way of making known to the public the utility of Disbrow’s Arena for the winter exercise of the saddle-horses), I accepted a very kind offer for the lame Prince—that of taking him into the stud of the Riding-school, to be exercised on the soft floor of tan-bark till his foot should recover—all against Torrey’s vehement protest, who declared that it was “ perfect nonsense ” to send the horse to the close stables of the city, and that he ought to be kept where he could get pure air enough and be let alone. And the wise blacksmith was right, again—confound it!—for the Prince fell immediately ill of the “ distemper ” on getting to the city, and liked to have died.

But—to hurry to the climax.

With Disbrow’s kind care and skillful doctoring, my colt came back to me in very good spirits in the latter part of March. Doubtful how much of his brief summer of early education he might have forgotten, and wishing, at any rate, to drill him back to my own handling and my favorite gait, “ while the nonsense was out of him,” I sent him

to "the shop," to have the temporary shoes, in which he had come home, replaced by new and strong ones—*receiving him again, in an hour, with no shoes at all!* "The horse was not ready for shoes, Mr. Torrey said." Straight back he was furiously and immediately sent, with express orders to have him *shod!!* And *straight back again, directly, he came once more*, with a little more explanatory refusal. "That colt needed a month's pasture, and soft ground for the hoof that was just healed to spread and grow out natural; and, *shoe him now, he WOULD NOT!* For most customers he was in the habit of obeying orders and letting 'em run their own risk; but he was Mr. Willis's friend, and he wasn't agoing to let him ruin a nice colt, if he could help it!"

No appeal from a decision so peremp-Torrey, of course; and into the large green meadow below my study window, the delighted colt was let loose every morning for his day's run—the thoughtful eye that looked off from a quiet ink-stand to see his caracolling and plunging, as he coursed around perfectly frantic with spirits, wondering very naturally whether there was anything still to "grow out natural" in the hoof that could stand *that!* And the colt, meantime, getting so wild, that he would have to be "broke" all over again! Torry's obstinate wisdom had over-shot the mark, *this time*, I was secretly certain—and, if I could only catch him at it, for once!

Well, there came a certain sunny afternoon of a May day—a week after Torrey had himself sent for the Prince to shoe him. A debilitating fever and hemorrhage at the lungs had had their three weeks' will of me; but, having been twice “out,” upon the smart grey roadster that I had ridden all winter, I felt, for that afternoon at least, as inex-horse-tible as ever; and the inspiriting air of such a delicious jubilee of spring was more in tune with the movements of the gay colt in the meadow. He was caught and saddled; and (with some difficulty, from his impatient fretting and my weak limbs), I succeeded in mounting and getting away. Most exhilarating movement, as he pranced on, over the smooth windings of the road down the glen! But, lo! a bother unforeseen! How was I to open that “pig-tight gate”—half a mile from the house and nobody within call? I had usually, and with the same horse, leaned over and lifted the latch; or, at any rate, in health, it was nothing to dismount for it—but how, *now* to get it open? It was an exultingly satisfactory offset to my embargo, as I sat perplexed upon that fretting and dancing horse, that it was *all owing to Torrey!* But for Torrey, I should have had the restless and impatient creature in training, six weeks ago, and could have opened the gate easily enough, sitting in my saddle!

There was nothing for it but to dismount, open the gate and let myself out, and then get on again—and this I did

with no small calling upon dormant agilities and improbable dexterities, and a mental piling on of the emphasis with which I should overwhelm that mistaken blacksmith with my (for once) unanswerable reproaches !

Not quite safe again in the saddle (remember that, oh, Torrey) ! I was leaning far over to adjust the stirrup to my still tremulous foot, when a man in an adjoining field (whom I had not observed, and who was gathering dry sticks in a thicket of sumachs), suddenly made a move with his crackling bundle. The Prince's head was towards the gate at the moment, but he sprang, as if he had been discharged from a catapult—not an inch backwards or forwards, but directly to one side, and *from* the side over which my whole weight was weakly and unguardedly bending—and I was thrown to the ground in an instant. Away went the frightened creature, at a furious pace down the stony hill of the public road, dragging me after him by the right foot held tightly in the stirrup, and, fortunately before reaching the bridge, my twisted foot found its release—the impression with which I started from home, as to the *light-footedness* of the colt considerably changed ! With four imprints of his galloping hoofs on my legs and body, he had trod that mistaken idea quite out of me !

Of Torrey-ism and its consequences, I but copy the melancholy bandages around my legs, as I write down, for the student of the Science of Friendship, these actual statis-

ties. *His-Torrey-cal* they deserve to be! But contrast the tenderness (!) of such strains and bruises, for a moment with the very different tenderness of my indulgent Morris! When did any act of complying Morris-ism ever hitch me to a black horse and use me as a ploughshare on the public road? My preference is, I think, justified—no offence, however, to my still valued and respected (though philosophically disparaged) Torrey! I am more fortunate than most men in having two such tap-roots to my tree of friendship (a *by-two-men-ous* nourishment which keeps me evergreen, of course)! and, though I hope, myself, to continue to profit by both indulgence and contradiction, I may have instructively recorded the contrast for those who can but choose between the two. And so, my dear Preference, I remain

Yours as ever.

NOTE.—The New York *Times*, copying from the *Newburgh News* a descriptive mention of this accident, adds a very courteous remark, to which (for the sake of making the public wiser upon a very important point of personal safety), I must make a somewhat definite reply. The *Times* says:

“Mr. Willis has given a good deal of very good public advice about riding, based on his own experience. We propose to return the service by advising him to procure and use a pair of Neil’s *Safety Stirrups*, which would have rendered such an accident as he has now sustained impossible. The arrangement is very simple, effective, and ornamental. The moment the foot is caught, the pressure upon a lever of which the upper part of the stirrup forms

an arm, draws the pin, and drops the stirrup from the strap. Of course no horseman expects to be thrown—but Mr. Willis's experience shows that such things may happen, and it is always best to be provided for contingencies. The safety stirrup is a very valuable invention."

I had a pair of these very stirrups on my saddle, when thrown, and though dragged some distance by the running horse, the stirrup which held my right foot *did not even finally give way*. Though I thought my ankle was dislocated with the wrench, I was under the impression that the patent lever must have acted *at last*; and, while I sat at the road-side, I sent my daughter (who in taking her afternoon walk, had chanced to see the accident, and assisted in picking me up), to go and look for the lost stirrup, feeling that it was impossible to use my trampled limbs, and that I must contrive to get once more into the saddle, to reach home. The horse was by this time caught and brought back (by the neighbor whose bundle of sticks had frightened him), and, looking first to the two "safety stirrups," *which were both firm in their places*, I was assisted to remount my horse, and so reascended the long hill again to my house. The fault of the invention (it seems to me) is, that the orifice of the stirrup is made smaller than usual (so that the lever shall be brought within reach of the falling rider's upturning toe), and, if the foot, instead of upsetting vertically, turns ever so slightly cross-wise (as mine did, and as a falling man's foot is very likely to do), *the toe catches the side*, and is thus prevented from reaching the lever. A stirrup simply made so large that no twist of the forward part of the rider's foot could get a hold upon the two sides at once, would, in my opinion, be a much safer thing.

With other editors I received a pair of "Neil's safety stirrups," and duly complimented the apparently excellent invention in the *Home Journal*. I regret to unsay my praises; but, as I am probably the only editor who has *made a fair experiment of the article*, I have felt bound in duty to thus publish the result.

## L E T T E R   X X X V I I .

Mouth made up for a Week's Feast on Physical Beauty—Journey to Springfield for the “Fair”—Miracles sold for cheap Tickets—Physiognomy of rural Massachusetts—Energetic improvement of Springfield Street and Houses—Male Passions for Horse-talk—Promotion of Horse-dignity at Springfield—Description of Races deferred, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *September.*

I LEFT home on the eleventh, as you know, for a week's pilgrimage to the shrine of physical beauty. It was a Monday morning of ripe and relishing September ; and, till the next Saturday night, my mouth was made up—the mouth of my outer eye, that is to say—for what banquets of flesh and blood I could find to feast upon. The Horse-Fair at Springfield, to be sure, was my main and nominal errand ; Chester Harding, the best painter of manly beauty as well as the noblest specimen of it, having bidden me to come and take a look with him at what Nature meant should be next below us in comeliness, the make and movement of

“ the noblest of the train  
That wait on man ;”

but it was for physical perfection—beauty in all that is warm and breathing—that my eye was to be open—for

the handsome man, who ought to be handsomer than his horse, and even for the degree still higher, the handsome woman, who should be handsomer than the man. Fancy and fiction I had shut up in my study closet. Intellectualities I had left to dry up with my inkstand. To sun my two open and idle eyes in animal beauty, was to be the carnival of the week—to find out what the *real 'live world*, at its present day and hour, had beautiful to see.

But, a word or two of my journey.

There are few finer shows, I suppose, in the way of scenery, than the first twenty miles down the Sound, after rounding Castle Garden in a Fall River steamboat. The receding city and the two shores of villas and gardens bathed in the glory of a sunset—seen, as it all is, from the swiftly floating palace in which you are borne like Jupiter in his cloud—comes nigh (if passengers did but know it) to an experience of the sublime. To be able to glide over just that magnificent track, at just that felicitous hour, by the “Fall-River Line,” is, for the scenery hunter, a happy accident; and the splendid comet that lighted us on our way was part of the performance, I suppose, though they did not (as for our gratuitous music on board the Powell in the morning) “pass round the hat.” It was curious (I could not but mournfully remark) that, of the hundreds of passengers on board, not five seemed to see either the sunset scenery or the comet. For any better

heaven than the evening papers and their supper, those many fellow travellers of mine, I was sorry to be made sure, were in no way on the look-out.

We slept through that still night, the moon and I, performing our respective journeys with as punctual swiftness as if we were awake; and, at the breakfast hour, I found myself with the two hundred miles put magically behind me, safe in Boston by the operation of the miracles of steam and rail. And what miracles they are! I must be excused for continuing to wonder at what we mortals get done for us by the purchase of a cheap little ticket at an office window!

Meaning to return, the day after the Fair, to the "city of notions," I passed but an hour or two in it, with a few whom I love; and, early in the afternoon was on the rail for Springfield. The collections of tidy pill-boxes, on the way—each town with its sprinkling of painfully clean and square houses set up like stools of repentance in the middle of the close-shaven farms—looked as agonizingly virtuous as they used to do when I saw them from the windows of the stage-coach on my way to college. The worldly railroad, as yet, had let in no corruptions of milder paint and more varied architecture. To go over the same pious ground so much faster was the only wonder. How is it that the held up forefingers of Massachusetts, those awfully white meeting-house steeples, give no monitory

shake as sinners go by at such a profane, whipped-up-itude of speed—thirty headlong miles an hour instead of the well-considered five?

In driving from the railway station to my friend's house, I was quite puzzled with the new geography of Springfield. The graceful acclivities in the neighborhood of the old town are wound around with irregular streets, or rather with well-wooded serpentine avenues of tasteful cottages and villas; the effect being very much that of a drive through Richmond, the prettiest suburban town in England. That some well directing spirit of great energy and good taste has been at work here, is visible also in the beauty of the grounds around the Public Armory, and particularly in the exquisite arrangement of the picturesque Cemetery near by. Springfield has some liberal and enlightened hearts beating in its midst—anybody would say on simply driving through the town. How blest some places are in the influence of one or two of their inhabitants!

Mr. King (Mr. Harding's son-in-law, who was to be my more especial host) had collected around his table some of the well-informed strangers invited to the "Fair" from a distance; and, as I found them over their coffee after dinner, I was soon an eager listener to the glowing themes of the place and the occasion. It is a bewitching un-intellectuality—horse-talk! The ladies must pardon us, but,

next to the adoring discussion of themselves, the most fascinating topic between gentlemen is horse-flesh. The points and performances of favorites; the experiences with driving-rein and saddle; the secrets of blood-crossing and quality-giving; the choice in stock, action and color; the bettering of grace and fleetness by union with endurance and strength—how charming are these game-y interchanges of knowledge and observation! Even if there are to be no horses in eternity (which I do not believe) the influence of this preponderating passion of mankind, even if it were only for its perfecting and elevating the abstract standard of beauty, would abundantly redeem it. Devotion to woman will make better angels of us, and devotion to horse will not be thrown away.

It is the recognition of this last-mentioned principle which gave the impulse to the Horse Festival at Springfield. The core of the movement is a philosophic wish to take a rational and exciting open-air pursuit from the hands of jockeys and gamblers, and elevate it to its proper level—to *the healthful and inspiriting enjoyment of it by gentlemen and ladies*. The starting-point—what the horse has been unjustly degraded to—is well expressed by a writer in the *Boston Courier*:

“The name of the horse has, in America, become so intimately associated with ever so much that is disreputable

and vulgar—horse-fanciers being popularly esteemed universal scoundrels and black-legs, and horse-gatherings being looked upon as invariable scenes of ‘vice compacted,—that the innocent animal himself begins to be regarded with a sort of suspicion, by reason of his involuntary connection with so many human beasts of a lower order, and even the best regulated horse-fair fails to receive the attention which the importance of its objects and its intrinsic interest should insure it.”

The horse’s true rank in the scale of existence has now, at Springfield, received its first American recognition. But the subject is inex-horse-tible, I fear, or at any rate, too long for a single letter. I must defer, till next week, the description of my day at the races, and my look at all the beauties on the Course. And, meantime, dear Morris,

Yours.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

Second Letter—Taking the Opportunity to look through a Wiser Man's Eyes—Drive to the Hippodrome—Visits to the Horses in their Stalls—Company of Good Observers—Horse “Hard-Times” and his Card—Beauty of the Petersham Morgan—Style of the Black Horse, “Lone Star”—Suitableness of Horse to his Rider—Perfecting of the Quadruped and Deteriorating of the Biped—Need of Reformation in the Shape and Condition of American Man—One Exception, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *September.*

My letter of last week gave you an outline of the journey to Springfield, with a statement of the new and noble purpose of the Horse Festival, to be there held, and some hints as to why it promised to be especially memorable and interesting. I meant to have followed up this introductory letter with a full and detailed description of the whole affair; but the newspapers have so completely anticipated me—treating it with cordial recognition as one of the leading topics of the day, reporting the very eloquent speeches at the banquet, and devoting column after column to the descriptive letters of their correspondents—that I follow, now, but as the sorry gleaner after the jolly harvest. Leaving the general features of the show, therefore, with which you are already familiar, I will gossip a little of

what, during its celebration, I chanced personally to "happen near."

Under the same hospitable roof with myself, were several of the Committee's invited guests; and, among them a Canadian delegate, who, I soon saw, had a better eye than most men for a horse. Wishing to find precisely this--somebody's eye better than my own through which to look more wisely at the day's wonders of four-legged beauty—I made known my aching void to this gentleman, boldly proposing myself as his companion for the day. With the privilege of an official ribbon in his button-hole, he was to make the rounds of the stalls and stables—examining the beauties in their *boudoirs* at his lordly leisure, and without hindrance or contradiction from the duenna-grooms. As each horse had a separate apartment, with a lock on his door, and as grooms have not the smoothest set of answers for those whom they are not particularly bound to respect, I was very considerably enriched by Mr. W.'s acceptance of my proposition.

Early after breakfast we drove down to the Hippodrome. This fine Olympia (finer probably than the old one near Athens), is about a mile from Springfield, and has been purchased for the horse-movement, at a cost of near thirty thousand dollars. There is one course, of a mile, around its sixty acres of velvet turf, and on the outside of this, stand the stalls for two or three hundred horses, while, on

the opposite side are raised scaffoldings for many thousands of spectators. If it were only as a standard by which to measure the enterprise, the first impression which the stranger gets, on looking down upon this spacious and well laid arena, is very inspiring.

As we passed in at the barrier, it was still an hour to the opening of the day's formal programme, and the long lines of stalls, with the grooms at the doors, looked particularly inviting. My friend bent his steps that way, of course; and, his ribbon being duly respected, we took the outer line of the forbidden beauties, and commenced our unblanketed beholdings. With the skillful eye of the Canadian, and the well-practised eye of Harding the artist, who made one of our company; with the knowing comments of two or three other well-informed gentlemen who had joined us, and with my own most glowing admiration, the superb creatures were, for once in their lives, at least, duly appreciated. They should have been pleased with our visit, if beauty, lovingly approached and critically and glowingly analyzed and declared wonderful, could give pleasure to the animal who stood listening, and who, of course, was, at least, animally conscious of the strength, fire and proportion so admired. If it were a horse that had by chance learned to read, he might be staggered a little, it is true, by the card nailed upon his chamber door —a large lettered account of his age, pedigree and perform-

ances, of which each privileged admirer was allowed to carry away a printed copy. Thus runs one of these cards of beauty-biography, for instance, which I begged of the groom, after some ten minutes' study of a noble horse :

“ Thorough-bred stallion, Hard-Times. Seven years old. Sired by Stavely, thorough-bred, out of imported mare—Favorite ; Favorite by English thorough-bred horse Eclipse ; Eclipse by Diomed, (see English Stud-book). Stavely was sired by Old Cock of the Rock, imported.

“ The dam of Hard-Times has trotted in 2.38. Hard-Times is thoroughly broken to every harness, and his speed when trained, will be very great. His style, beauty and action will speak for him better than words.

“ For sale and warranted in every respect.”

We walked into stall after stall, of the horses thus showily labelled, following up the promise of their noble haunches, measuring the knit of the loins and the lift of the forehand, feeling for the hard spot over the withers, (which is the certificate of blood), patting their proud necks and looking into their eyes and forehead for the intellect which should be there ; and I could not but feel that it was indeed—brute beasts though they were—a “feast of beauty.” Even when standing still in the stall, the perfect creatures were beautiful enough ; but, when one was occasionally led out and put to his paces on the green turf, to show how he would move, it was, in most cases, worthy of sculpture. There was one particularly,

in the effervescence of completeness and youth, whose beauty, for that peculiar type, I had never seen equalled. His groom was leading him about by the bridle, and restrained him with difficulty in the sight of the course. They called him the "Petersham Morgan." He was a richly dappled chestnut or dark bay, of a glossy coat, that, in its degree of silky fineness, was new to me; and only unlike the horses of the Elgin Marbles in being far beyond what the sculptor of those antiques ever dreamed of. With the profuse mane and tail of the breed he belonged to, every hair on his body seemed to express pride, strength and fire; and, with it all, was an effortless and strange lightness of step, a sort of unnatural agility, which made the sward seem to be an electric battery tossing him off as his feet touched it. He was small, but a handsomer creature, of that style and weight, could scarce be imagined.

A slender black horse, called "Lone Star," was also wonderfully perfect in his paces and proportions—the living prototype of disdainful and graceful beauty—and, for a woman to be lovely upon (leaving the horse to do the pride, in effective contrast with the gracious gentleness of his rider), "Lone Star" would be the model. In every different style of those superb animals, by the way, I saw the want of a particular size and style of rider; and it is curious how little attention is paid commonly, by gentlemen, to the *suitableness of the horses they ride*—not only

in proportionateness of height and weight, but in color and character of action. Brown, the equestrian sculptor, should give us a little manual on this subject.

In this hour of stall-visiting and unblanketing, we found, of course, excellent stuff for comparison and discussion. The art of removing defects and ingrafting excellences was fully discussed—"with illustrations." But the unaccountable wonder is (to repeat a remark I have elsewhere made), that, with such an example under our own hand of what can be done to perfect one family of Nature, the horse, we are not stimulated to extend the experiment to another and more important family, that of man. I could not help looking round upon the crowd, in coming out from the stalls and stables of the carefully perfected quadruped, and lamenting exceedingly the undeveloped and carelessly neglected frame and health of his master the biped. Of the hundreds on the field, within sight, there was scarce one who would not have been pronounced, by a jockey, an animal out of condition. They all looked as if they would need two or three generations of crossing with other qualities and complexions, and years of more careful training, feeding and exercising, for the restoration even of their own original type. Is not our country fatally degenerating on this point? And, since it is of the condescending bounty of God that we are "made in his own image," would it not partake of the character of a religious reforma-

tion, to restore to its proper dignity the image of God—in ourselves? Conversing with Governor Banks on the subject, that evening (himself a capital specimen of the Morgan build, pluck and endurance), I inquired whether it could not be made a matter of State encouragement—premiums to be offered for the finest formed and best conditioned families of boys and girls, among the mechanics and farmers. It might, at least, make health a consideration, if not a condition, in wedlock and its perpetuating of races.

I should be unjust to a very striking exception, if I did not mention here, that, quite the finest horseman on the ground, that day, was a white-haired gentleman, apparently of seventy years of age, mounted upon a very handsome bay, and sitting as upright and riding about the field as actively and securely as a man of twenty. I did not hear who he was, but he was a fine picture to look at, and the admiration of him, among the crowd, was universal.

And I may as well record that the next most admired performance on the ground, that day, was the driving of a fast horse by a child! The animal (a mare, called "Belle") was among the competitors for the trotting premium, and quite the most showy and fiery-looking of the dozen brought up at the start. The first mile was for a display of the "teams;" and Mr. Ellis, the father of the lad, accompanied him on this circuit—to the exceeding terror of all the ladies on the stand, dismounting at the

close of it, and leaving the handsome little fellow alone in the trotting-wagon, for the round which was to be a trial of speed. And away they all went, at a slashing pace ; the "Belle" gallantly holding her own, and probably every eye among the twenty thousand spectators fixed on her infant driver. With his little hands stretched forward to the reins, his feet braced against the dash-board, his head laid far back to the cushion, and his cap pulled knowingly on one side, he looked more like one of Titania's mischievous elves than the honest thing he was—a live young gentleman of Cambridge, ten years old ! But his coming in was the excitement ; for, to all appearance, the superb animal was wholly beyond control ; and, as he reached the Judges'-stand, among the foremost though not the first, the multitude was quite breathless. It seemed inevitable that, in the endeavor to stop her, she would break up and run. But the little driver began bravely to saw upon the bit, pulling with his whole strength upon one rein and the other, and to the screaming delight of the ladies, the "Belle" was pulled up ! Young Ellis turned and came back to the stand—received with the most enthusiastic hurrahs by his twenty thousand admirers. And—charming to add—the little hero stood up on his feet, as he dropped the reins, took off his hat, and made a circular bow to the crowd with a grace that would have done credit to a courtier.

But for the fact that the best horseman on the field was an old gentleman of seventy—(showing the possibility of vigor and skill at the other extreme as well)—this might have been called Young America a little too "fast!"

But I must have the room of another letter, I believe, to tell you of the trotting-races and cavalcades, with the lady-riders and driving-teams, etc., etc., so adieu for the present.

Yours.

## L E T T E R    X X X I X .

The Hippodrome on the Second Day—The Trotting-match—The Aspect of the Crowd on the Course—Ethan Allen and Hiram Drew—Philosophy of fast Trotting—Portrait of a famous Yankee Jockey—Cavalcade of Gentlemen's equipages—Lack of Style in American Driving—Society on Wheels and Beauty of a Park Drive—The Equestrian Cavalcade with Lady-riders—Unsuitableness of Crinoline to the Side-saddle, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *October.*

You are willing now, perhaps, to leave the private stalls of horse-beauty, and cross with me to the other side of the Course for a performance or two by the celebrated trotters. The ribbon of my Canadian friend and guide took me (on the way) within the folds of a certain privileged tent, pitched on the greensward within the ring, where, for committee and guests, was spread an inviting array of dry crackers and their naturally suggested lubrications; and having thus administered a tonic to our emulous antagonist, we passed on to the contest.

Twenty thousand people out of doors are a beautiful show, anywhere! And when you remember that the superb hippodrome of Springfield is in the lap of a velvet meadow, on the banks of the Connecticut and with Mount

Tom and its wavy outline of horizon forming the background, you will easily picture to yourself the beauty of "Hampden Park" and its gay multitude. It was the peculiarity of this gathering, you understand, that *ladies and the clergy* were fully represented; and, as the large proportion of two-thirds of the immense length of scaffoldings was alive with the glitter of gay ribbons and parasols, while, upon the judges' stand, the white cravats of New England's ministers gleamed thickly bright, the impression—splendid horses and showy equipages included—was brilliantly new. I was, for one, charmed to see the best quality of horse in such fitting quality of service—virtue and religion, for once, equipaged beseemingly.

The excitement of the morning, I soon found, was to be the trotting-match between Ethan Allen and Hiram Drew—the "knowing ones" predicting that the latter would win, though the former was more famous for previous victories. Hating the build of a trotting-sulky (with a driver looking as if his spine was screwed into the axle-tree—a man with wheels put to him), I saw the start with no particular interest. The fast trot, too, has always seemed to me an unnatural gait. Most horses do it without grace, and the most famous winners, in this particular kind of pace, are those whose instinct—that of breaking into a gallop with the increase of speed—has been most artificially untaught. Its superiority, besides, depends

much on what amounts to a deformity—the down-hill slope of the hind quarters, and an unnatural spread of the thighs so that the hinder hoofs will fling past with greater length of step—and a fast trotter, consequently, is, in most cases, neither graceful nor naturally stylish.

To all this, Ethan Allen, to my very great surprise, proved to be an exception. He was a gracefully formed, dark bay; and, instead of making a double effort, as most trotting-horses do (as if the hind quarters were worked by different volitions of the nervous system), he strode it off with a most beautiful oneness of movement, his head up, like a creature unpressed and taking it easy, and his whole form and action, when he was at top speed, suitable for a graceful ideal. The papers have recorded how finely he was the winner, in this well-contested race, and I thought he was a horse to be admired altogether.

Trotting (as Louis Napoleon seems admiringly to have discovered) is an Americanism; and though, in Ethan Allen, as a fine specimen of it, a foreigner would have been very much interested, he would have been still more curiously interested, I am inclined to think, in the utter Americanism of his driver! I had studied this man with some curiosity at the stables, where he was superintending the preparation of the one or two horses under his jockeyship for the day, and I must venture to wonder that Mr. Ten-

Broeck should have entered upon the arena of the English Turf, without Hiram Mace (this jockey's name, I believe) for rider and right-hand man. As everybody knows, the most common and every-day type of Yankee (the solemn and painful sharp) is not the smartest. Mr. Mace, though of a vigilant wide-awake-ness that could never be taken by surprise, was apparently of the most merry and careless off-handedness. One of the gentlemen of our party chanced to be a man of fortune and distinguished family, from the same town, and an acquaintance of Hiram's; and I could not but be struck with the hair-line suitableness with which the jockey responded to the salutation of one who was a man of his own age, and whom he had the daily habit, at home, of considering an aristocrat. With absolute self-possession, and with the smile of his merry good-humor hardly interrupted for those around, he was still courteous in his manner to this gentleman, and, in his replies to one or two professional questions, most pithily frank and sensible. His features are very finely cut, and, but for the exceeding keenness and resoluteness of his small grey eye, he would be almost too handsome and delicate to look formidable either in fight or bargain—but he is anybody's match, as is well known, in either. With a frame very slight, he is closely knit and symmetrical, and of a wiry vigor of activity, shown most admirably in the races which he rode afterwards in the saddle. I must

own that I took a great fancy to "Hiram Mace." He is one of the few instances I have seen of that incongruous mixture, the natural nobleman and the keenest kind of Yankee.

After the trotting-match, followed the portion of the day's show which was newest, and which I thought particularly commendable—the *cavalcade of gentlemen's equipages around the course*. There were not so many as there will be when this competition for a premium is better understood, and when the facility of sending horses and vehicles by railroad to distant points is a little improved upon; but the display was still creditable. One four-in-hand excited considerable interest, the whole team—(their united ages amounting to one hundred and five years)—being a remarkable instance of handsome carriage-horses kindly and carefully preserved. It was a timely and expressive exponent of Rarey's new principle of mercy to the animal; and, aptly enough, the name of the owner seated upon the driving-box, was Cordis—making it in hearsay as well as in fact the team *of the heart*. There were several superb pairs of horses in private vehicles; yet I could not but lament the drawback which the gentleman commonly made to his own "turn-out," the beauty and performance of the animals put sadly out of harmony by the lack of style in the driver! Those of our young men who go abroad would do well to pass an occasional after-

noon in Hyde Park, where they will see, by the driving of the phaeton, the curricle and the hunting-wagon, by the well-bred owners, that to be a stylish "whip" is a part of a gentleman's accomplishments. The posture, the holding of the whip and reins, and the nice control of the horses, mouths by the well-fingered "ribbons," are all matters of tasteful study; and the style of an equipage is often much more indebted to the way it is driven than to the costliness of vehicle or harness. I am looking forward to the inauguration of our new Park in New York, as the introduction to America of that *society on wheels* which is so delightful in London, and which, of course, will call attention to the accomplishment of well-bred driving. For the many who have equipages, this kind of daily resort is a most agreeable blending of the luxury of fresh air and change of scene with the social intercourse of exchanged greetings and inquiries, the refreshing of memories and the making of engagements. The few minutes of conversation from one vehicle to another, as they meet and stopped; the riding alongside of the ladies' carriages by gentlemen on horseback; the opportunity for well-appointed and well-attended displays of out-door *toilette* and style; these are attractive additions to social convenience and social refinement. Every city would be more agreeable for some such well-frequented drive, handsomely laid out, where the stranger would be sure, at certain hours, to meet the equipages of

the wealthier classes. As luxury is inevitable in our prosperous land, let us, at least, do it in becoming style and taste !

The equestrian cavalcade, graced by the company and spirited riding of two young ladies, was another most attractive feature of the day's show. As the band was playing very delightfully for the twenty thousand spectators meantime, it was not wonderful that the performance of one beautiful little palfrey, who pranced and kept time exactly to the music, should have received the greatest portion of the applause. But oh, the unsuitableness of every degree of petticoat balloonification to the action of a horse ! Will the ladies pardon me if I venture to suggest that all equestrian drapery, for them, should follow the figure, in unrestrained fold and flow ? Nothing could well produce an effect more inelegant than the inharmonious jerking up of a separately elastic inflation of the lady's dress, out of all time with the rise and fall of her own figure and movement. Prettier on horseback than in any other exercise, as woman certainly is, it seems a pity that her costume and equipment for the saddle should not continue to be artistically graceful—unaffected by the caprices of dress for other times and places. The bewitchingly becoming "Die Vernon hat and plume" still hold their place, I am happy to see.

Anticipating another day of these charming exhibitions,

I left the ground early—saving strength and spirits, too, for the committee's evening hospitalities—but it was the last of the show for me. A rain set in at midnight, which turned, the next day, into a flood; and I exchanged the very wet out-door promises of Springfield for the dry inside of the rail-car bound to Boston. The dear old town received me with one of the most glowing and beautiful of the old-fashioned sunsets I so well remembered in my boyhood, and—but it would take another letter to tell you of my next day's pleasures.

Yours as always.



## TRIP TO THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

---

### LETTER I.

Unceremonious Departure—The Journey South—Glimpse of the Susquehanna—Cloudless Welcome to Virginia—Digression to narrate a Story—Saw-Mill in the Woods—A Hoist into the Air unexpectedly—The Miller and the Interior of his Hut—His Death, that Night—The Scene of his Laying-out—Who he was etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, November.

My sudden acceptance of a proposal to make one in a party bound on a ten-days' trip to Virginia, and my flitting off without saying good bye to you (except by lifting my hat for your blessing as I flew past Undercliff in the cars), was, if you please, less considerate than usual. Before leaving you alone to "abide the issue," (of two numbers of the *Home Journal*), I should have waited till the alternate day, when, by your coming to town, we could have sat in council over our mutual inkstand. The "copy-drawer" is a sacred obligation! But, for a like offence, you had oft forgiven me before. And, remember the tempting rareness of the occasion—Virginia in the distance, and such fitting

companionship as two of the old-school gentlemen, for a first sight of the Old Dominion ! Then summer, you know, like a superior woman, is often loveliest when a little *passé*, and I longed to fellow it southward in its decline—to see the home of Pocahontas (as it should be seen), steeped in the thoughtful and calm beauty of the “Indian Summer.”

Our journey, by steam and rail, to the mouth of the Rappahannock, was a very interesting one to me ; but the mention of its agreeable points—of Philadelphia and Baltimore particularly, which I used to know so well, but which I had not visited for ten or twelve years—I will defer, till, in another letter, I come to our return. The most unchanged things, of course, were the rivers that we crossed ; and it was not without the tearful greeting of a look at an old friend, that I gave a glance, in passing, at the memory-freighted course of the Susquehanna—the beloved stream on whose windings I had once enjoyed a few world-forgetting years, blest in what would have been called, by the Barons of the Middle Ages, “the truce of God.” Tell me, dear old river!—run all your tributaries yet?—and of the bright waves that I saw, was there perchance a drop, that as it passed under the bridge at Glenmary, had helped make the music I once knew ?

We found the Chesapeake rather stormy, and in crossing the mouth of the Potomac, there was so high a sea, by the

meeting of strong wind and strong tide in opposition, that our little steamer might have believed herself in mid-ocean. Fortunately it was in the night, and there was (for me at least) a lullaby in the rocking; and as we rounded into the entrance of the Rappahannock, the next morning, I was rejoiced to see from the window of my state-room, that Virginia gave us the welcome that we wanted—a bright sun and a sky without a cloud.

As this is to be another of my “one-leg letters” written *stans in uno pede*, or with one wet of the pen—I will reserve my first impression of the “Old Dominion” till I can limn it more carefully, and give you instead, an isolated incident of our second day’s travel in the interior. It may prove, very possibly, the first news of the death of one you knew; for, of our large parish of the be-paraphrased, he was one of whom I have many a time made mention, and your own kind quill, I venture to say, has, ere now, called the public to admire him.

But, to my story.

Driving through the pine forest, some eight or ten miles back from the landing-place of Urbana—a spot made historical by its neighborhood to the burial-place of Washington’s mother and her kin—we came to a stream called Moratico Creek, on which stood a saw-mill, of which my practical companions wished to see the operation. More interested, myself, in a problem of negro contrivance, which I

saw about to be performed—the unloading of an immense trunk of a tree from a cumbrous ox-drag—I stayed by the road-side to look on. The wheels were very high, and as the enormous oak was to be pried first from the hinder axle when the forward one should be drawn away by the cattle, the small negro lad who applied the lever looked unequal to the task. In fact, the long end of the pry-stick was beginning to quiver with the first stir of the oxen, when, remembering that my own one hundred and forty-five pounds stood by unemployed, I jumped upon the pole as near as possible to the clutch of the slender negro, and, with the weight of the fallen log, was immediately hoisted with him into the air—coming safely down again, with a slight tumble in the sand ; but, as I looked at the lad's innocent black face, hoping I might never leave the earth in worse company ! He thanked me very politely, as he scratched his head over our mutual escape, and, as the other end of the timber was dislodged by the movement forward, he followed the loosened oxen up the road.

I mention this as the probable prompting to a civility on the part of the miller—a very sickly, grave, incommunicative-looking man, who crossed over from the tumble-down shanty under which his rough machinery was doing its work, and, applying a key to the padlock of a stone hut near by, invited me in. The single room was of wig-wam size and proportions, and the furniture consisted of

one long rude bench, a few ragged bed-clothes bundled up in the corner, a tea-kettle, one plate, knife and fork, and a broken frying-pan. A gun stood in the corner, and on the floor lay a wild duck, which had been shot that morning on the mill-pond. A question as to the number of kinds of this bird so plentiful in the region round about (of which he said there were thirty, naming, among others, the blue-wing, the canvas-back, the dipper, the black-duck, the ball-coot, the butter-duck, the summer-duck, the red-head, and the mallard), led to a conversation as to the climate, etc., etc., and I was very much struck with the quiet justness of his remarks, and their phraseology, and withal, a knowledge of the world which is only got commonly by much travel and observation. Under his slouched hat was a physiognomy very nobly cut; and his frame, spite of his heavy and tattered clothes, showed the very finest of herculean proportions. I took a very great fancy to my new friend as we sat over the smouldering logs of his huge fireplace, and speculated not a little as to his probable history. And who do you suppose he was? No less a person than McKnight, the once famous Hercules of "Turner's Circus," who, some years ago, used to astonish the world by resisting with his own legs and arms the pull of four horses, letting a forty-two pounder be discharged upon his breast, lifting unheard-of weights, and many similar wonders of skill and strength. In one of these horse-

encounters he had strained some vital portion of his loins, and had come to Virginia to go into sickly retirement as the overseer of a saw-mill.

But the sight of that magnificently moulded man, as he lay stretched, the next morning, on the rough bench where we had sat and conversed (for as we passed, on our return, we learned that he had died, a few hours after we had left him), was the impressive picture in which these introductory remarks will explain my peculiar interest.

Think a moment of the poetry—I may even say the sublimity—of such a scene !

The saw-mill, half in ruins, stood in the heart of an overgrown pine wilderness ; the winding road, for miles on either side, seeming, to the traveller, like the interminable aisles of a tall-columned and dim-lighted cathedral. With the death of the miller the wheel had stopped, and the absolute hush was deepened by the unruffled stillness of the large pond, which reflected, like the reality itself, the overhanging woods inclosing it—one single sign of life alone visible, the pull of a caught fish upon the dead man's pole, which, with its baited hook and line, he had left stuck in the timbers of the bridge ! It was a day of Indian summer, without a cloud in the sky or a breath of wind ; and the intense light which struggled down through the tops of the immense trees, looked, amid the deep shade, like the sharp edged fragments of a broken mirror.

And amid these effective surroundings stood the old stone hut, with its door open and its fire gone out, and, on its long slender bench of rough plank, the body of the one hermit-like tenant—his teams and their black drivers remaining for that day at their more remote homes, and he lying cold and alone in the solitude of the wilderness!

My friends, like myself, were struck with the exceeding nobleness and beauty of the dead man's features as he lay asleep. The clear sallowness of the skin gave the face the aspect of ancient marble, and the projecting forehead, the finely chiselled nose with its expanded nostrils, and the firm and well-cut lips below, aided in producing the effect of some admirable conception of statuary—the homely circumstances of the laying out, in that rude and desolate-looking hut, added not a little to its impressiveness. And then the height and breadth of the enormous chest of the dead man, as he lay on his back, clad only in his torn shirt and rough trowsers, his feet tied together with a coarse rope, and his hands crossed carelessly upon his breast, completed a picture, which, accidentally as it formed part of the sights upon the road in a day's journey, will hereafter be one of the most vivid in my recollection.

McKnight, if I was rightly informed, was a Rhode Island man, and has left a wife from whom he had been separated some years. As he was living here in apparently forgotten obscurity and seclusion, it is possible that this may carry,

to his family also, the first news of his death—the result, I should state, of suffocation in the congestion of fever). And so ended the life of a man who was gifted with points of superiority, which, to a knight in the days of chivalry, would have been an inheritance no gold could outweigh. That he was well endowed, also, in disposition and natural powers of mind, I should presume, from his countenance, the formation of his head, and his conversation. Peace to his manes!

My letter, with this chance story, has attained its length, I believe.

Yours always.

## LETTER II.

First Experience of eating a Persimmon—Suggestion as to Nature's Symbol for Secrecy—Chance for Cheap Living in "Ole Virginny"—Instance of Oblivious Life—What Good Blood may stagnate down to—Fight with the Guardian Dog—Interior of a Reduced Gentleman's Residence—Dried Apples produced—Mrs. X, as seen through her Dirt—Virginia Lack of Yankee Curiosity, etc.

IDLEWILD, *December.*

OF the few days we passed in Virginia I can give no very connected chronicle. The especial errand of my companions being a business visit to various extensive woodlands in the interior, we necessarily turned often upon our path, and zigzagged from the beaten track very irregularly. With, fortunately, the very finest of autumnal weather, we were continually on the move—drove about a great deal and saw a great deal. Of course the least interesting things to write about are the splendors and prosperities of a country ; so, of the noble old mansions and cultivated estates which were pointed out to us on the distant hills, and on the eminences along the banks of the river, I shall say nothing. My pencilled notes are only of the exceptions and eccentricities we were called to see or fall in with, and of the differences of character and manner consequent upon differences of latitude, habits and means of life. Please have your

indulgence ready, therefore, for only a mosaic of disconnected fragments.

One of the first of my Virginia experiences was the very new sensation of eating a *persimmon*. By its frequent mention in negro songs, this fruit has become classic, and I was as interested, in tasting it, as the traveller of Italy with his first pluck at a ripe fig. It resembles a small apple, as seen hanging upon the leafless twig, though the tree grows taller and with more spready branches than an apple-tree. There were plenty of them in the fields, as we drove past the corn-plantations in the open country, and our friend and conductor kindly jumped over the rail fence and brought me a handful. What this fruit can especially be intended for, by nature, I am a little embarrassed to understand—possibly to close the gate after enough has entered—for, of all the contractile agents, this seems to me the most pucker-y and unrelaxing. The mouth and lips are drawn so obstinately together, by eating a persimmon, that it would be difficult to follow it, even with “a drink;” though I am not sure that all its effects are so preventive, as the traveller, for the next mile or two after the taste of it, looks very much as if getting ready for a kiss—a kiss, however, of which, till the lips relax, the secret is very sure to be kept! Now, why would not a persimmon-tree stamped upon note paper, or graven on a seal, be a pretty hieroglyphic for secrecy? And why would not a *persim-*

*mon-kiss* (so called from this sweet lesson of nature to “kiss but never tell”), be a very handy phrase for common usage?

According to the statistics we incidentally picked up, this part of the Old Dominion which is most famous in history may now be the cheapest spot of the world to live in. It is common to let a log house to a man for eight dollars a year, with “as much land as he likes” thrown in to the bargain. Wood is so over abundant that there is, to a certain degree, no property in it, any man feeling at liberty to take, anywhere, what he requires for his own fuel. Of deer and wild game of all kinds there is great plenty. The highest price for a fat turkey or goose is fifty cents, of a wild duck one shilling, of corn meal but a trifle more than the cost of graining. Oysters thrive so plentifully in the creeks and bays that the poorest man can have his fill of them. Cows sell for five dollars apiece. Land can be bought for from one to three dollars an acre. With the half century of swoon or syncope which the State industry has had (from the general impression that the soil was exhausted), nature has had time to relift her primitive woods and repeople them with what is wild, and to reproduce such luxuries as come without the art of man. The trees, meantime, have been making their yearly returns of vegetative matter—the wilderness covered thick with a compost of pine-tassels and dead leaves. The climate

(with proper precautions against intermittents where the land lies low), is very healthy, the scenery beautifully varied, and picturesque, and—the associations are of his spirit whose home it was! *Washington lived there.* Considering how near such a region is to New York, and how accessible it is by water and railway, it is wonderful that it is not overrun and settled again by a general stampede of the great army of the unemployed in our large cities.

But, let me add, by way of contrast, to this tempting picture, a passing view that I chanced to get, of what “good blood” may stagnate down to, in corners where enterprise and progress have been long forgotten.

In conversation with a gentleman whom we met, as to the decay of families with great names, he mentioned a neighbor of his, by way of illustration; and, on my expressing a curiosity to see so marked an instance of oblivious life, he kindly offered, while my companions were called elsewhere, to be my guide as well as to furnish the excuse for a visit. Of course, in describing an incident of this kind, I can give neither place nor name, so I will merely designate the object of our curiosity as Mr. X., and my obliging guide as Mr. A.

Furnishing ourselves with sticks as a defence against the savage dogs that were known to guard the premises, we left the public road and took our way across several

rudely fenced lots, the only access to his dwelling being by thus climbing the rails and striking a bee-line for the distant chimney. Of the old family estate we were thus crossing, and which consisted of a hundred acres or more, no reasonable sum would probably buy any portion. The present tenant and holder of the name (one of the most aristocratic) manages, after his fashion, to live upon it ; and all he wants, of the remainder of creation, is to sell just so much, of the yearly produce of the estate, as will furnish him with what he requires of the un-get-for-nothing-ables of life—coffee, sugar, whisky, etc., etc.

Coming first to a tottering old moss-covered barn, we rounded one of its leaning corners, and, in the cow-yard beyond, stood a ragged little dried-up man, of perhaps fifty years of age, with his hands in his pockets, looking on while a couple of negroes counted out some potatoes. He hardly gave us a glance over his shoulder as he sluggishly returned our salutation ; but, on Mr. A.'s inquiring whether Mrs. X. had any dried apples to spare (which my friend knew was her bank of pin-money, and which he had made our ostensible errand, so as to get a sight of the interior), we were briefly told that we should find her at the house ; the slow eyes, perfectly satisfied with this half-look at his neighbor, returning them to the potato-heap.

There had once been a mansion on the place, if I understood rightly, but it had long ago tumbled down and

served for “kindling.” There were no signs of it remaining—or none, at any rate, that our fight with a large, black dog, as we neared the smoking chimney, allowed us time to observe. The hut that we were now approaching was one of three or four, standing together, and built of logs, plastered in the crevices with mud. It was originally, probably, one of the slave-cabins of the estate. The door was open, and, as it served also for the only window, the picture within was at first rather imperfect. I could see, however, that a woman sat upon her heels in the middle of the floor, and, as my friend reached the threshold, she said “walk in,”—not rising, however, and going quietly on with her task of sorting a heap of vegetables which lay before her.

By the time I had looked around for a seat (for, from the lowness of the roof, I could not stand upright), the old man had followed us in; and, as he stirred up the smouldering logs, in a fireplace which occupied one whole side of the hut, I began to see more clearly. An old-fashioned brass-mounted cabinet bureau, with a sloping top, two or three remainders of chairs, and a coffee-mill nailed on to the inside of the fireplace, were all the furniture visible; the double-bed in the corner being only a bundle of rags, and a rough board bench near the door, holding a most unclean variety of cooking utensils. Up against the wall, near the head of the bed, was a pile of cabbages, and there

were two or three separate heaps of potatoes and turnips lying around, from which it seemed to be the old woman's task of the afternoon to make an assortment. One lifted board of the floor showed a hole, two or three feet deep, and into this she emptied her basket from time to time, without rising from her squatting posture. Hers seemed to be all the energy of the establishment; for, as she repeated her commands to the old man to go out and bring in an armful of pine-tassels to overlay the vegetables in the hole, his remonstrative "look *year* child!" (the word *here*, south of a certain latitude, being commonly pronounced like *year*), and his lingering unwillingness to leave the fire were very expressive. "You never was *year* before?" he said to me, as he gave me a most uninquisitive look, in passing out upon his errand.

With the opening of the subject of dried apples, Mrs. X. rose for the first time to her feet, and I saw that she was quite a tall, straight woman, of perhaps forty years of age. She walked to the bed and pulled up the coverlet, drew out a long, dirty meal-bag, untied the mouth of it, and, producing a handful of the commodity, offered us a taste. Had the first apple been presented by so unclean a hand, our first parent, I venture to say, would never have fallen! Yet, as she held out the dirty fingers to me, she stood facing the door, where I could see her very distinctly, and I was surprised to see how fine were her features and how

large and really beautiful were her eyes. The look of a "born lady" was unmistakable. But the dirt on that well-moulded face was in cracks and seams, and it was evident that water was habitually a stranger to it! She had a quilted hood of greasy-looking brown calico tied under her chin, and a high-necked dress made of a sort of tow-cloth, which looked as if it might have been for years the cold-victual bag of a beggar. And with all this disfiguring drapery and dirt, I could not but be impressed with the entire absence of plebeianism in her air. Taken and un-Herculaneumed from her dirt, put through a Turkish shamponing or two, dressed like a duchess, and standing just as she stood when handing me those dried apples, she would have looked the title! The withered face of the dry little old man, also, showed features that had once been regular and delicate, though they were ludicrously caricatured by the narrow-rimmed hat which he wore—a dress beaver which had been gradually razeed till it was about the depth of a soup-plate, while the top, sewed in with coarse thread, let his hair through at the cracks. His other clothes seemed to have been condemned to be worn till they should rot off, and were very near the end of their purgatory.

We left the hovel at the close of a bargain, between my friend and the old woman, for "a bushel and a half—all she thought she could spare," though she hailed us before

we had got out of hearing, to say that she “didn’t know but she could make up her mind to two bushels if he would send for them the next morning.” And so live two well-born human beings, who by no means think themselves poor, but who have gradually forgotten the world and its artificial wants and usages, till they positively prefer to thus burrow in the dirt—perfectly contented, too, with their worse than brute animal condition! As I said before, it is a picture of what “good blood” can stagnate down to, which is worth recording for the philosophy on human life.

One other sign we saw of this opiate in Virginia air—(the lotus-eating effect, perhaps, of the tobacco principle on its native soil)—and I mention it as a curious contrast to our Yankee wide-awakeness and curiosity. Soon after the steamer’s entrance into the Rappahannock, somewhere about eight o’clock in the morning, we came to the first landing—a solitary pier running out from a very lonely spot on the river bank, and with only one shanty in sight and one human being. There were some goods to be landed and a passenger or two; and, as a steamboat makes its appearance at that point but twice a week, one would naturally suppose its arrival to be something of an event. Yet the one visible inhabitant, a white man at work on the beach near by, hewing at a “dug-out,” or log canoe, with his axe, never looked around! I watched him for a few

minutes at first, for I was interested in seeing a piece of work so new to me; and when one of my companions remarked the man's lack of rustic curiosity, I waited to see whether he would not give us at least a parting look. As the rope was cast off, a boy came to the edge of the sand bank and called him to breakfast; upon which he quietly laid down his axe and walked slowly up the road, turning his back to the departing boat without even a look over his shoulder. Such a *poco curante*, I presume, could hardly be found, at any steamboat-landing on the Hudson.

With my delay over these eccentricities, of our chance picking up, I have not yet got fairly into my subject; but I hope to find myself in "Ole Virginny," in my next letter—trusting, too, that, on my pen, as in the negro's banjo and heels, it will "never tire."

Yours meantime.

## LETTER III.

Drive through the Pine Woods—An old Chapel—The Craves of the Family of Washington's Mother—Copy of an Epitaph—The Blind Preacher—Female seclusion in Virginia—Disappointment as to their Horses—Excellent way of hitching Horses—Tandem of Cows—Carelessness of personal appearance in Virginia Gentlemen—Mistaken impression of a Fellow-traveller, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *December.*

THE first long drive that I took, into the wilderness stretching back from the shores of the Rappahannock, seemed to me (as I have before remarked), like a day's journey through the aisles of an interminable cathedral. The effect was added to by the noiselessness of the wheels over a road carpeted with pine tassels and of a sandy soil in which for miles there is not a pebble, as well as by the absolute solitude of a country in which there did not seem to be a human being astir. Nature alone, the great High Priest, seemed swinging the censers of the tree-tops and filling the air with the exhaustless incense of the pines. But, how wonderfully straight and tall grow the tree shafts that sustain the roof of this vast temple! No underbrush—for it is forbidden to grow, by the eternal shade of the evergreen foliage. Nothing but a wilderness of countless columns which the eye stops in following upwards to such

unaccustomed heights, just as it returns bewildered from the immeasurable aisles winding on every side away. They who are born and reared in such a home, or whose daily thoroughfare it is, from school to dwelling, or from the farmhouse to field, would scarce fail, one would think, to have reverence for God ingrained in their habitual thought. The dim light, the atmosphere, the silence and the majestic grandeur of all around, seem irresistibly hallowing and contemplative.

Riding slowly along, in the very midst of this great priory of the wild-wood, we came to a small brick chapel, surrounded with massive tombs. It looked like a forgotten place, for the immense trees grew irregularly about, close to the mould-incrusted walls, and the very heavy supports of some of the moss-covered entablatures were caving in—one of them which had originally been most solidly built, being quite in ruins. And these were the graves of the family of Washington's mother! The well-engraved slabs of freestone were all brought from England, as were the bricks of which the chapel was built. The name of the family was Ball,\* and this is the name upon all these

\* In Washington's family history, as given in Bishop Meade's excellent work, is a letter from one of his uncles on the maternal side, who resided in England. It reads thus :

“Stratford, 5th of Sept., 1755.

“Good COUSIN,—It is a sensible pleasure to me to learn that you have behaved yourself with such a martial spirit, in all your engagements with the French, nigh Ohio. Go on as you have begun, and God prosper you. We have heard of General Braddock's defeat. Everybody blames his rash conduct. Everybody commends the courage of the Virginians and Carolina men, which

tottering gravestones. I copied the inscription of one of them—an uncle of Washington's who died when the nephew, who was to be the world's greatest man, was eight months old. It read thus:

"Here lies interred the body of Mr. David Ball, a twin and seventh son of Captain William Ball, gent., born 26th of September, 1686, departed this life 14th December, 1732."

It was but a few miles from this, on the bank of the Rappahannock, that the cottage stood where Mary Washington, the widowed mother, reared her six children—little dreaming, probably, of her first-born's destiny and fame! But, what a mother she was! And how precious is every memorial of the blood that was such a fountain of mingled greatness and goodness! Should not these tombs of her kindred be included in the Mount Vernon Restoration and Consecration, to be held sacred under their Nature-reared chancel-roof of towering pines, as the home of what was once dearest to Washington—the spot where

is very agreeable to me. I desire you, as you may have opportunity, to give me a short account of how you proceed. I am your mother's brother. I hope you will not deny my request. I heartily wish you success, and am  
"Your loving uncle,  
JOSEPH BALL."

"To Major George Washington, at the Falls of the Rappahannock, in Virginia, or elsewhere.

"Please direct to me at Stratford, by Bow, near London."

(Bishop Meade adds that the writer of this letter was married to a Miss Ravenscroft, and settled in London as a practitioner at law.)

clustered the family memories of the one American mother to whom the world is most grateful ? \*

The secluded place of worship which hallows this burial-place (called White Chapel Church, Lancaster county), has probably often heard the eloquence of "the Blind Preacher," so feelingly descried by Mr. Wirt, the parish of this Mr. Waddle, as I afterwards understood, being at Lancaster, a few miles distant. There is little need, however, of accumulating interest in the memories of such a spot. We climbed up and looked in at the dim windows of the old chapel, and saw the walls and ceiling on which *her* eyes and her sons had often rested during the worship of God. There was, to me, a strange nearness and newness of realization, in thus coming upon what had been so fa-

\* It will aid here and there a reader, perhaps, in recalling the picture of this most eminent of women, if I copy, from Mrs. Kirkland's "Memoir of Washington," the mention of her death. She states that soon after his Inauguration as President, he was seized with a violent illness which confined him for six weeks. "Before the President had entirely recovered, he received intelligence of the illness and death of his aged mother, of whom he had taken a tender leave when he set out to assume the presidency, feeling that he should probably never see her more. It is said that at this last parting, Washington, embracing his mother, bowed his head upon her shoulder and wept, murmuring at the same time, something of a hope that they should meet again. 'No, George,' she replied, 'this is our last parting; my days to come are few. But go, fulfill your high duties, and may God bless and keep you.' His mother was then dying of a cancer which at last put a painful end to her life at the age of eighty-two. Honored as she deserved to be, and showing to the last the resolution and fortitude which had distinguished her through life, she descended to the grave with dignity, and left a name far above all titles. To have been the mother of Washington was enough. The world has agreed to consider some of his noblest traits as derived from her; and to her steadiness of character, her sound, common-sense views, her high and stern morality, and her deep sense of religious responsibility, are undoubtedly due a large part of the illustrious virtues which made her son what he was."

miliarly associated with his childhood—with the more religious and graver of the youthful thoughts of the boy, brought hither as he undoubtedly was, by his mother, in attending divine service near the graves of her kindred. I felt, somehow, as if I had more possibly “touched the hem of his garment,” here than at the “Head Quarters” where he was commander-in-chief.

We could not well avoid, while travelling through a neighborhood which had been thus inhabited, the looking around for those on whom Mrs. Washington’s mantle had perhaps fallen. When Lafayette came hither to pay his respects to the mother of his friend, “he found her,” (says Mrs. Kirkland), “at work in her garden with an old sunbonnet on.” “I have seen a portrait of her,” says the Memoir again, “when she was still the fair Mary Ball, and I could not help fancying that the lofty forehead, determined brow, and cool calm eye of the picture, prefigured well the high-spirited and keen matron, who, in her old age, replied to her son-in-law’s kind offer to manage her business for her: You may keep my accounts, Fielding, for your eyesight is better than mine, but I can manage my affairs myself.” It was, I say, a contrast to this which we could not help recording, that, in all our wanderings of three or four days over the neighborhood where she lived we did not meet a single white woman out of doors! It chanced to be dry under foot, the finest of weather for

riding, driving, or any manner of exercise in the open air, and we passed scores of plantations and fine residences, yet neither in vehicle nor on horseback, in garden or road, did we meet or see damsel or lady ! This might have been chance , but it looks a little as if the habits of exercise, brought over by the Fairfaxes and Washingtons, and so necessary to the perpetuation of the type, are fallen into disuse.

I went to Virginia with one other expectation, based upon its ancient renown—that of meeting gentlemen riders upon the road, mounted upon the finest of horses. In all stories of the Old Dominion, the horsemanship of her sons is made much of, and in Irving's Life of Washington, he says : "The great number of fine horses in the stables of the Virginia gentlemen, who are noted for their love of the noble animal, had enabled Cornwallis to mount many of his troops in first-rate style. These he employed in scouring the country, and destroying public stores. Tarleton and his legion, it is said, were mounted on race-horses." With a vision thus sharpened, and my own "special weakness" for the animal, I naturally had my eye set for a well-mounted horseman at every turn of the road ; and horsemen in great numbers we saw—many more, in proportion to the number of passers-by, than would have been met in any rural neighborhood of the North—but on very poor nags indeed ! One only I chanced to see, with any look of blood in him, and I could not resist the impulse to go

up and pat his arched neck—very much the feeling with which, as a traveller on the Nile, I should pick up ever so modern a paddle that chanced to be adrift, sure that it was a remnant of Cleopatra's barge. The master, who was on him, and who stood at the edge of a wood, waiting for the dogs to turn out a fox, was very courteous in his response to my stirrup-sympathy, but he did not seem to think much of the horses of the neighborhood.

I noticed one equestrian habit, in Virginia, however, which I most heartily wish might be copied by our less courteous population at the North. In passing a country post-office, where several gentlemen had dismounted, waiting for the arrival of the mail, I noticed that they tied their horses, not to the *trunks* of the trees, where the impatient animals would gnaw off the bark, but *to the branches* out of reach over their heads. With the number of beautiful trees that we have lost at Idlewild by the less thoughtful hitching of the teams of strangers to our elms and hemlocks, I could not but mention this Virginia politeness, with a hope of its northern imitation.

And, talking of hitching, I must mention one other Virginia excellence in this line. With no fences at the sides of the roads, it is an economy of course to have the cows of one *mind*, when being driven from place to place. They secure this by arranging them in a long tandem, the horns of one hitched to the tail of another, and so on.

The only trouble being, then, to keep the head one in the right way, and any pluribus-unum-imity of a scamper into the woods being stopped by the first tree, it requires but a small boy to drive a herd. I have so often seen my man out of breath, from the cows having different geographical tastes, in the tangled paths of Idlewild, that I thanked Old Dominion for the idea.

I had made up my mind, after the first day or two of observation, that I would venture to record, in print, my disappointment as to Virginia gentlemen, in the matter of *personal exterior*. As they came cantering along with their loose bridles through the woods—pointed out by our guides as the high named owners of estates in the neighborhood—I could not but be struck with a slovenly carelessness of dress, such as could alone come from a confirmed indifference to the public eye. I say I had intended to remark upon this prevailing degeneracy from the Fairfax and Washington standard, and I had selected one Virginia gentleman to “sit for his picture”—a fellow-traveller in one of the boats on the Rappahannock. He certainly was a marked instance of it, and what with the tobacco-juice oozing from the corners of his mouth, dirty linen, and coat out at the elbows, I could hardly understand what I saw, by his conversation with those around, to be his position and condition. I was concluding that he was either a ruined gambler or a prodigal son of some well known and

respected family, when I saw him do something which at once redeemed him in my estimation. Previous to retiring to his berth for the night, he left his half dozen companions around the cabin stove, took the Bible which lay on the shelf by the mirror, and sitting down by the candle in the corner, read for a few minutes, in apparently complete abstraction. Then, closing the book, he sat for a few moments with his hand over his eyes—his face, as he rose and came towards us, looking so different from what I had before thought it, that I saw I had mistaken my man! Though a sloven in his exterior, he was neither ashamed nor afraid to honor God openly. And thus I will believe that the neglect of the outer man, with which I had been disposed to find fault, is often, in Virginia, but a thin crust over hearts kept right, and qualities inherited from better days.

In my next letter I may take you a little further into the interior of the State. Meantime,

Yours in a Highland snow-storm.

## LETTER IV.

Negro Happiness in Virginia—Persevering Politeness against Discouragement—Family's Slaves Moving West—Evening View of a Negro Cabin—Aunt Fanny, the Centenarian and the Black Baby—New kind of Negro Music—Pig-matins at Daylight—Chats with Negro Woodsmen—Virginia Supply of Black Walnut for Coffins—Adroit Negro Compliment—Family Graves on Plantation—Visit to the Hut of a Murderer's Widow.

IDLEWILD, *December.*

DID it ever occur to you to speculate upon the difference it would make, in the minds, moods and manners of the throngs in our streets, if that monster and nightmare of life, commonly understood by the phrase "care for a livelihood," were removed? I cannot explain in any other way, the prompt and good-humored politeness, the ready wit, the really almost universal apparent gaiety and content, of the negroes of Virginia. We were all very much struck with this, in our few days' ramble through the Old Dominion. The smile and service were so ready, the reply was so invariably and often so ingeniously courteous, the look of easy, care-for-nothing happiness was so habitual upon the countenances of all ages, that, for the first time, I realized what I had been always used to, as the contrary—how haunted are our working-classes at home by the spectre of

responsibility in want. What a smile-killer it is! What a dampener of spontaneousness of tongue and brain! What a spoiler of the general sunshine of human faces is this care for a livelihood! Truly, the mere doing the work is the least part of earning a living.

The perseverance of the southern negro's politeness—however you may account for it—is a very agreeable difference between him and his brethren at the North. On board the different steamboats on the Potomac and Rappahannock, where many of the passengers were of the rougher classes of white men, we saw it very thoroughly tested. Nothing could well be more repelling than the surly heave of the shoulder or the curt monosyllable with which the best-phrased civilities of the waiters on table were oftenest received—yet it made no difference! Their ingenuity to suggest or invent a want, if there was none waiting to be supplied, was wholly indefatigable. The smile was easy, and most submissively appealing. The manner and the words were well chosen and graceful. How is all this persevered in, against so much discouragement?

On the forward deck of one of the boats ascending the Rappahannock was a bevy of some twenty slaves, whose master was taking them to his new residence in Arkansas. As they had come from an old Virginia plantation, in the interior, we watched them with some interest. They were of

all ages, men, women and children, and a better conditioned or more contented company of working-people I never saw. I looked in vain for any sulkiness, or abstraction, or other sign of brooding over a hidden pain or sorrow. Whatever care any one of them might have had, personal or conditional, it seemed overbalanced by the blessed consciousness that the cares of the day were no business of his—he “was only a passenger.”

At one of the plantations where we passed the night, the master of the house kindly assented to my wish for an inside view of one of the log-cabins. Somewhere about eight o'clock, in company with the young man whom he gave me for a guide, I crossed the courtyard to a low hut, from the cracks and crevices of which streamed the light of a bright fire within. It was the domicil of ten or twelve “haulers and steady cutters,” who, after their work all day in the pine woods, came here to cook their supper and sleep. The scene as we opened the door was very picturesque. One whole side of the hut, according to the proportions of backwoods architecture, was fireplace; and, in front of a glowing heap of pine logs, sat the two who had charge of the cooking—a most tempting looking corn cake in one frying-pan and a mess of pork in another. A boy of fourteen or fifteen years of age, sat with a jack-knife by a large heap of oysters, on one side, opening for the company; and around, in all possible attitudes, on the

floor and up against the wall, lay the laborers, with their feet to the fire. I saw no beds. They seemed to lie down with their clothes on. One or two were asleep—probably to be waked up when supper should be ready. From one old fellow in the corner came the only approach to an uncivil speech which I heard while in Virginia. “Hullo, dar!” he roared out, very gruffly, to the boy who was sitting with his jack-knife by the heap of shells, “keep digging out dem oysters, and don’t be looking roun’ at noting at all!” Though perhaps this was intended as a correction of the lad’s freedom in looking at the stranger.

On another plantation where we were most kindly entertained, there was a curiosity in the shape of a negro woman of great age; and, the little son of our host undertaking willingly to show me the way to “old Aunt Fanny’s,” we started for our visit after breakfast. There were several huts close together; and, at the half open door of one of them, the little fellow stood for a moment, calling to Aunt Fanny to make her appearance. And she came presently, with quite a lively step, a neatly-dressed little old mummy, as nearly dried up as skin and bones would any way permit, and most politely invited us in. It was a log-cabin, and the interior was exceedingly neat and comfortable. A bright fire burned on the hearth, the floor was cleanly swept, the bed in the corner with its patch-work quilt looked very inviting, and, on one side of the chimney, sat

a handsome young woman of perhaps twenty-five years of age, rocking a cradle in which lay a black infant asleep. These were descendants of Aunt Fanny ; and, with her, they had lately fallen to their present master by inheritance—a comfortable home for the old woman, while she shall live, being thus provided by law. And to “the institution,” it appeared also that the young mother was somewhat indebted, for the lad who was now her husband having fallen in love with her, his master had bought her from a neighboring planter and seen them happily married. In the ten minutes’ conversation which I had with the old woman, she expressed herself very religiously, and seemed patiently “biding her time” to go to a better world. It was apparently as happy an old age as is often seen.

I was a little mystified, at one of our sleeping-places, with a new specimen of negro music. Just before daylight, a sort of half melodious, half painful scream commenced making the circuit of the house—something which I, at first, took to be the incoherent wail of a madman, but which, by long repetition, grew at last into a concerted tune; aided also by a gradually strengthening accompaniment of something like the stamping of feet. Straining my eyes in all directions, I at last discovered a radiation, towards the house, of innumerable little black pigs, coming from every quarter across the fields and at all sorts of paces. The chanter of the pig-matin revolved

presently around, a tall old negro with a slouched hat and his arms folded so as to get his hands out of the cold, and past him scampered his light-footed parish to their morning devorations—the song continuing vigorously, to make sure that they were all called in. It appeared that the little sinners have the run of the woods all day and night, fed, in the morning only, at the trough; and it is this healthful exercise, probably, with perhaps some little flavor from their nut-eating and rooting, which gives the fame to the “Virginia ham.” But the established music which summons them home is certainly a very penitential combination of notes, and, as the overture to a *peccavimus omnes*, to be chanted before daylight in Lent, is worthy of Catholic notice and analysis.

As much of the time of my companions was occupied in verifying the surveys of land where the felling of timber was going on, I had plenty of opportunity for chat with the negro wood-choppers; and I found them as amusing as they were universally good-humored and polite. The “stint” of work, I found, was but the cutting of one cord of pine wood a day—scarcely the half of what is “piled up” by any regular woodsman in our neighborhood. For this (where the slave is hired of his master), the wages are from ten to twelve dollars a month, besides food, lodging and clothing—somewhat more than a laborer gets for his winter work, with us. One very intelligent fellow, who

handled his axe quite beautifully, inquired of me whether the *fashion for coffins* was likely to change at the North. I was a little puzzled with his question, till he explained that the present demand of *black-walnut*, for that final convenience, affected his class of chopping very considerably. The supply of the obituary staple from Virginia was new to me ; and I could not tell him, of course, how soon the dead might return to their mahogany. Curious twin products, for which to be indebted to the good old State—coffins and tobacco !

I was amused at the adroitness with which another young fellow contrived to turn a reply into a bantering compliment. He happened to have a remarkably handsome beard ; and, in talking of the way coal was now superseding wood, so that the trees would soon be left to stand, not paying to cut and send away, I said : “ So, this fine timber will be like that long beard of yours, very handsome where it grows, but not worth paying taxes upon, for want of a market.” “ Ah,” said he, “ massa ! you and I too young to be berry anxious what dey’ll tax us for our beards quite yet !” As the handsome rascal stood showing his teeth, and stroking down the silky black floss upon his chin, I wondered whether he knew how much of a courtier he was—coupling his own age and beard with those of a gentleman past fifty !

Our host, for one night, was but a temporary tenant

occupying what was once the mansion-house of an old plantation. The graves of the family were in one corner of the garden, and those of the slaves in the field outside, separated only by the wooden paling. The last proprietor had sold out and moved to Alabama; but he had lately sent to know whether he could take the liberty to come and inclose the whole graveyard with a handsome paling, and plant it with evergreens, to be kept sacred. There seemed to me a very precious privacy in this old Virginia usage of burying within the limits of the home estate, and, if it were not for the uncertainty of tenure, how preferable it would always be to the kind of disowning that there is in the putting away of beloved remains to the common graveyard!

There was one home that we saw, upon our third day's tramp into the interior, of which I can scarce hope to describe to you the unutterable sadness. It was a log-cabin in the very heart of the wilderness, far removed from any other human dwelling; and here lived the widow and children of Tasco Adams, the free negro who, a few months ago, was hanged for murder. The mother was away—gone probably to some distant house to beg food for her children—and we went in to see what might be the refuge of the affrighted little ones who had fled from the door at our approach. Over the embers of a nearly extinct fire, stood shivering a little sickly girl of six or

seven years, holding in her arms an infant of perhaps ten or twelve months, bundled in rags, while an almost naked child of two or three years clung to the tattered petticoat hanging in strings around her. A dog, as nearly starved as an animal could well be, crouched in behind the last brand in the chimney. There was no fuel around the entrance, and no sign of food within. The floor was of hardened mud, and a few rags in the corner were all that looked like a bed. For a picture of squalor and starvation, I had never seen the equal of that hovel's interior! And what a place to be left alone in, with such a memory! Yet a smile could be born, even here. As we gave the little wasted girl three pieces of money, one for each, she evidently remembered her mother, and looked up to me with a gleam over her dark face: "If you please, sir, one more!" she said. And a more beautiful smile than received that "one more" piece of money, never was born in a palace!

It were too long a step to pass from this entail of shame and want to the mention of the largest of human inheritances—the memory left behind by Washington—so, of our next day's approach to the childhood's home of the Father of his Country, I will reserve the description for another letter.

Yours always.

## L E T T E R V.

Caught asleep—General Mint-julep before Breakfast—Virginian Refinements of good Eating—Reembarkation on the Rappahannock, for Fredericksburg—The River, along through King George County—Country-seats of the Carters, Tayloes and other well-known Names—Scene of George Washington's Boyhood—His Mother and her humble Cottage—His every-day Appearance and Character at Fredericksburg, when a Boy—Difference of the Boy-ideal from that of a Man—A second Picture of the adolescent Washington, from sixteen to twenty—His first Visit to Belvoir and Intimacy with the Fairfaxes—Wish that a gifted Descendant of this Family would give us their Remembrances of Washington—Fredericksburg itself and its Tomb and Chapel—Snow, and Journey across to the Potomac, etc., etc., etc.,

IDLEWILD, *December.*

THE steam-whistle of the boat that was to take us to Fredericksburg (one day's passage higher up the Rappahannock), caught us asleep—the State which is famous in history for its “heroes and hunts, its hams and hominy, its handsome handmaidens and hearty hospitalities,” having cast its spells over us! I had gone to bed after watching, by the light of the full moon, the picturesque galloping away from our host's door, of some bold riders and most agreeable fellows, with whom we had made merry from noon almost till midnight; and good fun (I have always found) is, of all night-caps, the most dreamless and solid. The awaking whistle, however, which so took us

by surprise, was blown at the landing below; and, between that and the wharf where we were to embark, there was a circumbendibus of the crooked river to be performed by the boat—so that, for a hasty *toilette* and a hastier breakfast, we had, still, something like railway time.

I am indirectly apologizing, by this explanation of haste, for the very inadequate notice with which I am compelled to pass by a certain Virginia “institution”—the MATUTINAL MINT-JULEP, or anti-febrile stomach-nudger—served to the male guests on their first rising in the morning, and previous to their introduction to the ladies. This most appetizing potion is prepared in a family tankard, of the size which it takes two hands to lift; and it was most gravely passed around like a solemn and savory “good morning,” as we entered the drawing-room before breakfast, each guest burying his head successively in the thicket of the fragrant herb, and subtracting his own “tithe of mint,” with a measure of breath wholly discretionary. As a sanitary precaution (in a locality where the morning air is to be dreaded on an empty stomach) this breakfast courage is doubtless very expedient; but one can scarce help rejoicing also in a certain secondary effect—the social fusion, or the dispelling of morning’s natural moodiness, consequent upon this passing around of a cordial for all lips. In fact, of the full enjoyment of this Virginia “institution,” as beginning to be felt by the merry party

assembled immediately afterwards around the table, the too early coming of the boat was felt by all to be a trying interruption.

I may as well mention here, *apropos* of the art of nourishment as perfected in different latitudes, one or two other assistances of Nature, which I had not met with in previous travel, and which may help to account for the larger stature, greater fecundity of language, and other generous exuberances characteristic of Virginians. The dinner is commonly at one o'clock, the day's hungriest hour; but, at twelve, there is a first summons to the side-board, and, at half-past twelve, another, for the sake of confirming, by a little "something and water," the preparatory condition of the stomach. The dinner itself, of course, is of that profusion of meats and game for which the State is famous; but its final culmination was new to me —the passing around of a tray of raw oysters, to be eaten from the shell, and, by the liquefying insinuation, and uncloying succulence of which any omitted crevice or forgotten pore or vesicle of the careless or inattentive stomach might be securely reached. On leaving the table, after this oyster climax, the stranger would naturally suppose dinner to be over; but, with a brief hour of cigars and conversation in the drawing-room, the folding-doors were again thrown open, and lo! in the centre of the table, a vast punch-bowl of "*egg-nog*"—an appetizing digestive, by

which any tardiness or torpor of the reluctant stomach might be encouragingly overtaken. This golden liquor was dispensed with a long silver ladle, by our host, as we stood around with expectant tumblers; after which, of course, we returned more cheerfully to our double labors of digestion and conversation. Tea with the ladies followed naturally at six; and supper at nine; with hot toddies indefinitely thereafter. But it will be seen, that, in modern Virginia, they "live well."

Our steamer (which makes this trip but once a week) took all the rest of a short autumnal day for the tracing of the remainder of the Rappahannock up to Fredericksburg. But it was a voyage of great beauty. The river soon became very narrow, and very serpentine in its course, and the wooded banks, brought so near, were of course made much more bold and picturesque. With the suddenness of the turns it often seemed as if the bow of the boat were carving out a new river as it went along. This has always been the wealthiest part of Virginia; and, on the eminences a little back from the shore, stood the spacious mansions, which, when named to us by our conversible captain, we recognized, at once, as the homes of distinguished families long heard of. We took a good look, among others, at "Mount Airy," the country-seat of the Tayloe family, to whose hospitalities at Washington strangers are so much indebted. Then there was "Sabin

Hall," where lived the Carters, and "Sandfield Lodge," and "Gaymont," and a score of others which have been the cradles of the Past-days' "beautiful and brave." We saw but one new building, of any pretension, and that was a most sumptuous residence, close to the bank of the river, just completed by Mr. Pratt of Camden. Over all the rest were gathering (what is painfully unusual in most of the landscapes of our land of fresh paint and whitewash) the middle tints of walls and angles long let alone.

But, as we came nearer to Fredericksburg, there was a "spell of the Past," which (for me at least) essentially displaced the Present. A cloudy twilight was falling upon the banks of the river, as we glided along where it used to be known that "George Washington was the only boy who could throw a stone across it." Here used to play the lad, of whom history now records what an old gentleman of the neighborhood chanced to say of him: "Egad he ran wonderfully! We had nobody hereabouts that could come near him. There was young Langhorn Dade, of Westmoreland, a confounded clean-made, tight young fellow, and a mighty swift runner, too, but he was no match for George." And let me quote from history another picture of what came back, as we neared Fredericksburg, with the vividness of a walking dream—the early days, in this valley, of him for whose *memory as he was when a child*, its horizon of bold mountains is *now* proud to be the

honoring sarcophagus. Thus records Mr. Weems, the clergyman of the parish—giving the story as he heard it from an old lady who was a relative of the Washingtons and had spent much time in the family :

“On a fine morning in the fall of 1737, Mr. Washington, having little George by the hand, came to the door, and asked my cousin Washington and myself to walk with him to the orchard, promising he would show us a fine sight. On arriving at the orchard, we were presented with a fine sight indeed. The whole earth, as far as we could see, was strewed with fruit, and yet the trees were bending under the weight of apples which hung in clusters like grapes.

“‘Now, George,’ said his father, ‘look here, my son ! Don’t you remember when this good cousin of yours brought you that fine large apple, last spring, how hardly I could prevail on you to divide with your brothers and sisters ; though I promised you, if you would but do it, God Almighty would give you plenty of apples this fall ?’ Poor George couldn’t say a word ; but, hanging down his head, looked quite confused, while, with his little naked toes, he scratched in the soft ground.

“‘Now look up, my son ! look up, George !’ continued his father, ‘and see there, how richly the blessed God has made good my promise to you. Wherever you turn your eyes you see the trees loaded with fine fruit, many of them indeed breaking down ; while the ground is covered with mellow apples, more than you could eat in your whole life, my son !’

“George looked in silence on the wide wilderness of fruit. He marked the busy humming bees, and heard the

gay notes of birds; then, lifting his eyes, filled with shining moisture to his father, he softly said:

"Well, pa! only forgive me this time, and see if I ever be so stingy any more!"

Of his mother, as she appeared at that time, Mrs. Kirkland gives us a picture:

"There is, at this day, an old lady at Fredericksburg who remembers her mother saying that Mrs. Washington often came there to drink tea, riding in what is called in Virginia a 'stick chair'—*i. e.*, an old-fashioned unstuffed chaise without a top—bringing little George on a stool at her feet."

Of his birthplace, the sketch is also very precious:

"There, in that old farm-house, which was so old-fashioned and dilapidated, that the family (at the time of their removal to the more immediate vicinity of Fredericksburg) did not think it worth preserving many years longer—a four-roomed house with a chimney at each end, which chimney was carried up on the outside; at ten o'clock in the morning, was born a little boy, fair-haired and long-limbed, but so much like other boys that it is hardly probable even the most sagacious of the neighbors thought him likely to become one of the greatest powers of the earth." . . . "The family lived very plainly, and the new-comer opened his dark blue eyes on a scene no grander than may be found in the plainest Virginia or Vermont farm-house of our own day. There was, we may be sure, a low ceiling; a great wide brick or tile fireplace; a well saved carpet, with a few straw-bottomed chairs, and a tall

old bedstead with posts like sloop-masts—such a one as Washington slept in to the end of his life." . . . "It was one of the preparatory blessings of George Washington's happy lot, that he was bred in this plain and simple way. It made him easy to please, fond of wholesome and innocent pleasures, and satisfied with plain things for his own use, all his days, although he had taste, and knew how to conform to fashion in matters which concerned other people. He was most at home in a farmer's plain clothes, roving the woods with his gun, watching the performance of the plough and the harrow."

"Mr. Washington (his father) left the old farm on Pope's Creek when George was very young; indeed, some say, soon after he was born; but only to exchange it for another, probably a better one, on the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg." . . . "The same plain style of living continued; and George now old enough to go to school, was sent to a schoolmaster, rough as the pines that nestled about the poor old school-house—an old fellow named Hobby, one of Mr. Washington's tenants—who used to boast, in after times, when he had become superannuated and somewhat addicted to strong potations, that it was he, old Hobby, who between his knees had laid the foundations of Washington's greatness."

Of the *Fredericksburg every-day picture* of the boy George Washington, another touch or two may well be recalled :

"Among the items of Washington's early training we must not omit to mention the robust physical exercises to which he subjected himself, prompted naturally by his sense of great bodily power, and incited still more by the

pleasure of companionship; for it seems to have been much the fashion to try strength in running, leaping, pitching the bar, wrestling, etc. An old governor of Virginia, Nicholson, had, long before, instituted public games, and distributed prizes for proficiency in all these athletic sports. Washington was early able to manage a fiery horse, and to use and confirm his own sinews by feats that none of his companions could equal. Whatever stirred his blood, and brought his muscles into vigorous exercise, was his delight. His young lady companions complained sometimes, we are told, that George cared nothing for their company, but would always be out of doors. There is a story of his having ridden to death a fiery colt of his mother's, which nobody else dared to back. It is said that the good lady was very much provoked, but said, 'I can forgive you, because you came at once and confessed it. If you had skulked I should have despised you.' . . . . "All his life long he was at home on horseback. He was popularly called the best rider in Virginia, where all are riders." . . . . "He inherited from his mother a love of good horses, for this was one of her characteristic traits. We should judge, from his life and letters, that he spent at least half of his threescore and eight years on horseback. This could not have favored his being a graceful walker, and, accordingly we hear that he was not such; but his great length of limb preserved him from being like the jockey, who 'always walked as if he had a horse under him.' He had a direct business-like manner of walking—Mr. Custis says, 'a straight, methodical, Indian walk'; but as an Indian walks with his toes turned in, it seems hardly probable that Washington's appearance would have been as we know it to have been, if he had allowed this strikingly ungraceful fault in his carriage to

become habitual. He was very careful of his appearance, being a person of great natural taste; and one who had a just estimate of its importance in regard to the impression we make on strangers."

Thus was outlined—(from the marked passages in the books I had read, descriptive of Washington's early life)—the shadow that now filled the twilight air, as we landed on the spot which was, in those days, most familiar to him. Washington had been a boy here! And I could not but remember, as I stood on the river bank, to which he alone, of the school-boys on the opposite side, could throw a stone—where he was daily seen and known as the lad who was the best rider of young colts and the best runner of boy-races—how different is the ideal, that is thus portrayed to the imagination, from the one which, at Mount Vernon, is, at this moment, the object of the nation's thoughts! Between us and that Washington—the sage, the statesman, the saviour of his country—the gulf of separation is one only to be spanned by revering awe. Of his apotheosis before death (for his fullness of a renown, that may well be called superhuman, was complete, long before the grave set its seal upon it), Mount Vernon is the threshold—the place where repose the ashes now held sacred as "the mantle that fell from him as he rose." And hallowed forever be it! But, if possible, *we would come nearer to him than this!* There is a secret yearning in every human

heart to "touch the hem" of the prophet's garment. We want the more familiar knowledge of the great man which enables us to feel that he was not altogether unlike ourselves—that he has walked on the same ground, and might have known and talked with us. And how admirably does it meet this sympathetic yearning of the heart—how cheeringly and satisfactorily—to picture forth the boy Washington of the Rappahannock!

The few hours that we passed in Fredericksburg, were thus, for me, irresistibly spell-bound. I felt the "spirit of the spot"—the presence of the fine, brave school-boy, George Washington—as I never had done in reading of him, as I probably never should do without walking on the ground where he had played. Strange! how the spot of earth that has been the cradle of a great soul will thus stay enchanted with the promise elsewhere fulfilled!

And yet there is still *another George Washington*, the haunt of whose spirit is to be sought at Fredericksburg—the George Washington of sixteen years of age—the "tall, handsome lad, by no means considered a prodigy, but thought highly of by the neighbors"—just leaving school, "with an education very incomplete," and coming home to his widowed mother, who, in her low-roofed cottage, had now her second and sorcerous travail, her son's launch upon the world, laboring at her heart! And how would the picture of him as he then walked through the streets of

Fredericksburg, on the daily errands for his mother—*exactly as he appeared* to the neighbors who were then familiar with his form and features, with his habitual gait and his recognitions of acquaintances and friends, his dress, manners and mien—compare with the George Washington of our Mount Vernon ideal? How inestimably precious, to inquisitive though still idolizing posterity, would be that every-day picture of “young George,” could it be re-conjured from those neighbors’ eyes!

Perhaps, of this same period of his life, however, there would be a more poetic picture in his look as he seemed to the Fairfaxes at Belvoir, on his first modest visits to those great people. History records for us that it was considered the especial good fortune of George, that his elder half-brother, Lawrence, who was very fond of him and who had married Anne Fairfax, made him familiar with these new connections, then the wealthiest and most influential people on this side the water. Let me copy a passage or two, as the *palette* whereon the colors for this adolescent portrait of Washington are ready mixed:

“Lawrence had been sent, as was the fashion of the times, to seek in England the education which this country did not then afford, and he had afterwards been induced to join the armament sent by Great Britain, in 1740, to the West Indies. Here he distinguished himself and won the confidence and respect of the British commanders, Admiral

Vernon and General Wentworth. He intended to go to England and to remain and seek a promotion in the army, in which he had already held a captain's commission ; but having fallen in love with Miss Anne Fairfax, daughter of William Fairfax, a near relation to the eccentric lord of that name, he stayed at home to be married, and soon after, settled down on the farm in Fairfax county allotted to him by his father, which he afterwards named Mount Vernon, in honor of the gallant admiral.

"George's mother seems to have limited her ambition for her boy to making him an intelligent, honest and thriving planter, able to survey his own land and other people's, to keep accounts with exactness, and to be proficient in country business, in which was included of course the practice of hunting and fishing.

"Lawrence had him often at Mount Vernon, where was to be found the best society in the country, and particularly that of the Fairfax family, who were well-bred though somewhat eccentric people. William Fairfax, the father-in-law of Lawrence, and the owner of a fine seat on the Potomac, a few miles below Mount Vernon, was a cousin of Thomas Lord Fairfax of Greenway Court, the proprietor, by grant from the crown, of the whole immense tract of land between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. The acquaintance with these men of wealth and distinction, then made at Mount Vernon, proved of immense and controlling influence to George Washington." . . . "Mr. Fairfax writes of him, at the time, to Lawrence : 'George has been with us, and says he will be steady, and thankfully follow your advice as his best friend.'"

. . . "It was in March, 1748, that Washington set out, in company with Mr. George Fairfax and a small party, to explore immense tracts of wild woodlands in the Alleghany

Mountains. . . . It was very serious earnest, involving both fatigue and danger, and there must have been something very remarkable about *a boy of sixteen*, whom Lord Fairfax, shrewd and keen-eyed as he was, intrusted with it. The young surveyor was accompanied by William Fairfax, brother of Mrs. Lawrence Washington, but Washington himself was the responsible person."

. . . "The intimacy of the Fairfaxes was, in all respects, particularly important to Washington, and, for its solid benefit to his fortunes and its shaping power over his manners, deserves to be counted among the providential preparations for what was to be required of him. His early training had certainly been of the homeliest sort. His father's landed possessions had brought work rather than money; his mother was the declared enemy of all superfluity, and she counted as superfluity whatever had no reference to business. The traditions of her neighborhood represent her as contemning the softer arts, and viewing with more than misgiving the mere graces of society."

. . . "But the Fairfaxes undoubtedly did him great aesthetic as well as other service. They were high-bred people, wealthy and living in the exercise of a liberal hospitality, as well as in constant intercourse with the mother-country, to whom alone we looked for social example before the Revolution.. Lord Fairfax, besides the advantages resulting from his rank, was of University education, a man of the world, and moreover a thinker, an independent character, and remarkable for his sagacity and discernment. His nephew, William Fairfax, was rich, and held a high position in the colony. His seat of Belvoir continued for many years to be the resort of all that was to be had of well-bred and highly polished society. The

family was altogether the first in the district where they lived, and one such family must do much towards raising the standard of manners and ideas in the neighborhood. They intermarried several times with the Washingtons, and had done so in England, before either stock was transferred to America.

"A young man must be dull indeed, if the society of gentlemen and elegant women have no inspiration for him. Such a one was *not* George Washington, certainly! When we read his 'Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation, we need not be assured that no grace of manner, refinement of expression or conversational improvement that came under his observation at Belvoir or Greenway Court, passed without notice from him."

Mrs. Kirkland (from whose captivating Memoir, of Washington in his youthful days, I have made these extracts) strengthens one of the side lights for the picture—though with a concluding remark that is somewhat at the expense of poetic dignity. She says:

"It is curious to note how considerable a portion of Washington's private correspondence is with ladies. With those to whom he was in no way bound except by friendship it was very large. This does not bespeak the stern business machine, which it has been the fashion to consider him, and we can imagine that few volumes would astonish the world more than a complete collection of the letters of friendship written by Washington to ladies." . . . "Young as he was, the letters referring to a hopeless passion for some 'lowland beauty' are sup-

posed to have been written at this time. There is the beginning of an acrostic on the beloved name of ‘Miss Frances Alexander,’ which may perhaps have been the production of the same time of life; but it is only a beginning, atrociously bad in point of poetical execution, and evidently given up (after the X) by the author himself. The effort to express passionate thoughts in verse is common to all ardent minds, but his education had not been that which can render such expression easy or graceful. We must congratulate ourselves on the failure, *for who knows where we might have been now, if Washington had turned out a poet?*”

By these chance records in history, it is easy to see that the youthful George—(with all his latent Washingtonian superiorities of inevitable good sense, far foresight, cool judgment, calm courage and sound principle)—was, most probably, to the eyes of common observers, at this time, only a handsome and promising stripling, very like many another in the neighborhood. The influence of the Fairfax patronage upon his fortunes (particularly his being sent out, at the age of sixteen, by Lord Fairfax, as surveyor of his vast estates between the Rappahannock and Potomac) was doubtless looked upon, by all his mother’s neighbors and by his own youthful friends, as a bit of wonderful good luck, which would be the whole key to anything unusual in his career. But how charming it would be, to see him, as he then presented himself at Belvoir, and as he seemed to the “Mrs. Fairfax,” to whom

was addressed, nearly at this time, one of the most characteristic and beautiful of his preserved letters! Why should not the Fairfaxes (of whose descendants I chance to know that there is one now resident in Virginia, whose fair hand holds a most dainty and gifted pen) give us, from their family records, the many photographic memories they must contain of Washington, *from the age of sixteen to twenty?*

But, to return to Fredericksburg.

Of the town itself I saw but little. The evening was dark and stormy, and various local visits, that we had proposed, were prevented by the cheerless aspect of a ground covered with snow. We had wished to see the tomb of Washington's mother; and I wished, particularly, to go to that wild chapel of rocks and trees, near her cottage, to which (as is recorded) she was in the habit of repairing every day, for her devotions—the spot where rested the ladder to heaven of *that* mother's prayers for *that* son! With a look at the sky and a little consultation with my companions, we concluded to defer these pilgrimages; and, for a future visit to Belvoir, and to other interesting spots in Virginia, to bring saddle-bags and mount horse, at some more genial season. A glimpse of the forsaken streets was all that was to be obtained before the departure of the train; and, with an hour of railway (shorter time than the boy George Washington, who so

often rode it in the saddle, ever dreamed it would be done  
in) we crossed from the Rappahannock to the Potomac.

In re-reading my letter, dear Morris, I find that it is of  
*rather* a mingled yarn! But so is life—and so, especially,  
is travel—and I weave it for you as Fate tangled it  
for me.

Yours, unrevisingly.

## LETTER VI.

Valley between the Potomac and Rappahannock—Washington's Frequent Ride across the "Neck of Virginia"—His Personal Appearance, when a Young Man—Young Washington the Surveyor—A Chance Tableau of Contrasted Fairfaxes and Planters—The Young Englishman on Board the Boat, and our Virginia Captain—The Captain's Outer Man compared with his Passenger's—His New Invention—The Reading of his Application for a Patent—The Young Englishman's Self-sacrifice for Friendship—Parting of the well-trimmed Plant of a London Gentleman, and the George Washington "Run to Seed," etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *Christmas Eve.*

My last letter closed with our trip across from the Rappahannock to the Potomac—the start for our return home. As this "Neck of Virginia," as it is called, however, chanced to be the fifteen or twenty miles which the promising lad, George Washington at sixteen, oftenest rode over on horseback (the route between his mother's cottage at Fredericksburg and the Fairfax mansion at Belvoir) you will not object to retrace it with me. In the wavy outline of the horizon, at least, whatever may be the changes in the details of the scenery, the traveller still sees the frame on which the handsome young horseman broidered his thoughts as he rode along; and, in resting my eye on the same mountain eminences which were the signal posts of

his early survey of that very tract of land (the important first commission from Lord Fairfax, of which his precocious manhood must have been so proud), I once more found myself picturing him as he then looked. And it was easy to do it! Try, yourself, as you now mentally traverse that romantic wilderness with me, the making younger, by a few years only, of the portrait left us by the historian—George Washington as he seemed when he first took the command of the Army of the Revolution. Let me refresh your memory with the stirring passage to which I refer:

“On the morning of July third, the troops were arrayed on the Common at Cambridge, to receive their general. The *cortége* from Watertown was anxiously watched for. Though Washington was not then the Washington of our memories, yet enough had been said of him, of his bravery, his patriotism, his talents and his gallant bearing, to excite unusual interest in the troops. At length the trampling of horse amid a cloud of dust, ushered in the commander-in-chief and his *suite*, all picked men and finely mounted. As they approached the line, the eye sought and easily recognized him in whose bearing should shine forth the right to rule. At the same moment the central figure galloped forward, and, wheeling his charger beneath the great elm which still adorns the spot, drew his sword, and flashing it in the air, took command, in form, of the armies of the United Colonies.

“It was not difficult to distinguish him from all others, says Thacher. ‘He is tall and well proportioned, and his personal appearance truly noble and majestic.’

“That this was not mere outward appearance, or even

effect of mental traits only, we are assured from various anecdotes showing the great physical power of Washington at the time. One in particular recounted by an eye-witness is quoted by Mr. Irving. It occurred on the green at Cambridge. It happened that some dispute among the soldiers had brought on a fight, and, as blows bring blows, the mischief spread until a great number of men were engaged, and there was a general and dangerous *mêlée*.

"In the midst of it, says the narrator, the commander-in-chief galloped up, I know not from what quarter; but, quick as lightning he sprang from his horse, threw the bridle to his servant, and dashed in among the combatants. Seizing two great powerful fellows by the collar, one in each hand, he shook them soundly, talking to them all the while, and them mounted his horse again and rode quietly off, the crowd having dispersed at once, requiring no further hint.

"Mrs. Adams says, of the impression made on her by Washington, at first sight: 'Dignity, ease and complacency, the gentleman and the soldier, look agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line and feature of his face.' These lines of Dryden instantly occurred to her:

" 'Mark his majestic fabric ! He's a temple,  
Sacred by birth and built by hands divine ,  
His soul's the deity that lodges there ;  
Nor is the pile unworthy of the God.' "

But this same godlike man, but a few years before, was only "young Washington of Fredericksburg," newly known as a "surveyor"—the one who often rode across the peninsula between those two rivers, and, as he drew bridle at the far-apart doors upon his way, exchanged salutations with

the inhabitants, and sought employment in his profession. History thus sketches George Washington the surveyor :

“The business of surveying, at that early day very profitable, had the further advantage of introducing Washington to the favorable notice of land-holders and men of influence, whom his merits very naturally made his fast friends, and under whose auspices he found all the employment his health and strength allowed him to undertake. These acquaintances were first his employers, then his friends, afterwards his advocates with those in authority when office was in question; further on, when the great struggle began, his admiring companions and colleagues; and thence onward, to the end of his career, his firm adherents and supporters, feeling only too much honored in being counted among his neighbors and compatriots, when he had become known as one of the master-spirits of the world.”

And so, having told you which of the “George Washingtons,” of progressive history, was present to our thoughts as we crossed from the Rappahannock, come back with me once more to that beautiful river, and let me pick up a jotting or two, which, in my last hurried letter, I had overlooked.

On board the steamer, as we made our last day’s approach to Fredericksburg, we had a fellow-passenger, who, in connection with the captain of the boat, seemed to me to form a curious *tableau vivant* of Virginia in the time of Washington. It was a young Fairfax, fresh from the well-appointed and careful niceness of high-bred English life,

and making his first acquaintance with the free and easy planters of the Old Dominion. Whether or not a true picture of that period, it was, to me, a most amusingly vivid contrast of character, as seen in that light; and I must try, at least, to give you a look into the same magic mirror, though the flesh and blood "spirits," still alive and kicking, may not prove altogether subject to the waving of a goose-quill wand.

With the young Englishman's appearance we were all very favorably impressed, in coming on board in the morning—finding him almost alone in the cabin, but very well established and at home, as he had been a passenger since the boat's leaving Baltimore, the night before. He was the perfection of an animal in high condition. Middle-sized, straight, compact and athletic, he looked so uncommonly well taken care of! In his clearest of complexions the white and red were as well distributed as in the cheeks and lips of a rigidly be-governed young lady of sixteen; his teeth looked as lustrous and cool as the edge of a snowbank; his pink and pearl finger-nails terminated fingers of the daintiest action. A little too close cutting of his light hair took away from the grace of his head but added to the air of neatness; and a silky blond whisker on each cheek showed what the upper lip might have done, please God, in the way of a moustache, if he had "gone into the

Horse-guards." His thick, sensible shoes and gaiters were well brushed, and his shooting-jacket, waistcoat and trowsers, though of the coarse grey material which is now the fashion, were of the cut and fittingness beyond suspicion of "ready-made."

Unconscious of our presence, of course, for a while, the indignantly clean stranger studied his map and looked at his pocket compass, watching the scenery and evidently perplexed a little with what the magnetic needle told him of the boat's variations of north and south in following the windings of the river; but the captain, after a little while, hippopotamized his huge limbs into an easy-chair, near by, and the conversation became general.

You see such men as the captain occasionally, in Broadway, but seldom with the same amplitude of manners and costume. He was naturally a magnificent man, "Continental" in all his proportions; very tall, very broad-shouldered and of very large noble features, and with a most good-natured, careless courtesy of address; but—in his Dismal-Swampiness of a beard three days old, in his linen of many a neutral tint, his wisp of a black cravat tied under his left ear, his dress-hat which was "as well as could be expected" after much unforeseen experience, his blue body-coat with brass buttons (it and the black trowsers immemorially virgin of brush), his untied shoes and revelation of brawny chest by a general open sesame of shirt-bosom—

forming, altogether, as striking a contrast to the tidy young Englishman beside him as could well be imagined.

But the two were very great friends! Rappahannock had not the smallest possible misgiving of his own United States'-worth of condescending agreeability; and Fairfax, to all appearance, credited him with the amount. It was only a little embarrassing to the young Englishman, I soon observed, that the same unmitigated intimacy, which had been all very well while he was the only passenger in the upper cabin, and so alone with his new friend, was now to be sustained in the presence of three new comers who might possibly "think it a little odd." His own most studious use of the plainest and simplest language (like the proper "St. James St. Man" that he was), had no manner of effect on his friend's four-story adjectives and six-horse figures of speech! And, presently, his ability "to stand any more" was put to a test, out of which he came, I thought, quite gloriously—a charming illustration, in fact, of Sir Philip Sidney's beautiful rule of friendship: "There is nothing so great that I fear to do for my friend, nor nothing so small that I will disdain to do it for him."

The captain was a candidate for fame. On the upper-deck stood an apparatus, of his construction, for turning salt water into fresh—tin pail and two stone jugs connected by a lead pipe, amounting to an impromptu distillery to be worked by tea-kettle application of steam—and, of this

valuable invention, he expected the formal recognition of Government, or, in other words, a patent and a "suitable appropriation." To show this wonder of ingenuity to us, individually, was the speedy inventor's easily accomplished wish, soon after our coming on board; but that was not enough. He had prepared a manuscript essay, of about ten or twelve closely written sheets, on the science of auto-hydrostatics with common utensils, as illustrated by his arrangement of every-day jugs and pail; and of this he wished to have a formal reading to the company.

The speech with which this most formidable-looking manuscript was brought to light, was certainly very staggering. The captain's conscious thought was evidently that of a High Contracting Power introducing a miracle of invention to the attention of Queen Victoria—of whom, as "Our Royal Sister," he made half-a-dozen different mentions before he got through. But he wound up at the close with a formal request to the stylish young Fairfax that he would read the document aloud! And of the embarrassed gentleman's compliance—considering the place, the presence of none but strangers, the half-ludicrous aspect of the whole affair, and the very doubtful complexion of the rumpled and ill-written manuscript—I had not the slightest expectation.

But he did it!

With a stammer or two—a few London exclamations,

such as “really!” “’pon my word!” “I positively fear!” “you’ll excuse me,” etc., etc.,—he manfully swallowed something that was rising in his throat, buttoned his coat, pulled up his shirt-collar, gave one deprecating look at the company, and went bravely at it! The punctuation and spelling were, of course, at the reader’s own expense; but the extent of sesquipedalian processionizing of the solemn superlatives and scientific phrases was most tryingly beyond the modern English supply of wind and utterance. A harder call upon the elocution of a well-educated and modest youth was probably never made. And, for the twenty minutes that it took to bring it to a close, the listening and spacious captain sat back in his chair with his hands crossed on his stomach, and his large features in a satisfied glow of authorship, presenting (as I started with saying) a specimen of outer man, which, in contrast with the other specimen of the article (gentleman) from the original garden over the water, was very suggestive. Probably a similar contrast was presented, on the same river, a hundred years ago—the athletic and large-featured Rappahannocks of that day (of whom George Washington was one), comparing, in the same overgrown manner, with the newly arrived young Englishman who came over to “settle.” It was hard to realize that the two who sat before us were plants from the same original stock, though they undoubtedly were so, as were the Fairfaxes and Virginians of old time—our majestic captain (perhaps it

should be allowed, however !) being the “George Washington” a *little* run to seed !

At one of the landing-places on the river, the well-appointed young Englishman gathered his “traps” together—his snug valise, his nicely boxed and strapped gun and shooting-bag, his map and guide-book, his stick and umbrella—and, with a most affectionate leave of the captain (with whom he had evidently been exceedingly amused, and to whom he had taken a great fancy), he was set ashore. In conversation with him I learned that he had chanced to fall in with a very delightful family from Virginia, in his travels abroad, and that he was now on his way to visit them ; with the primary object, however, of seeing how the country looked, thinking that he might possibly transplant hither that “younger son’s portion” which thrives better in new soil. When I expressed a fear that he would find it lonely in these pine woods so far away from his London “club,” he said : “Oh, I should go home every year, you know, of course !” So that Virginia woods do not seem so far off from London as they used to do, probably.

Of the half-dozen omitted memoranda which I took you back to the Rappahannock to pick up, the enlarging upon only one has engrossed all the room of a reasonable letter. Possibly I may give you the other “stray waifs” hereafter. For the present, a merry Christmas to you !

Yours always.

## LETTER VII.

Charm of the Number Seven—The Nile among Periodicals—Virginia Tea-table Peculiarity—Virginia Fashion of Ornamental Trees—Talk with a Physician About Intermittents and Negroes—Fever and Ague something of a Bugbear—Prescription—A Neglected Bird—Superiority of wild Geese to tame—Curious Restoration of a Virginia Church—Former and Present Standard of Manners—Mount Vernon from a Historical Point of View—Curious Document, etc., etc.

IDLEWILD, *January.*

I WILL try to get home in this seventh letter. I expected to do so in the sixth; but, somehow, seven seems always to be the charmed number! Of healthy parents, seven children, I believe, is about the average—then there are the “Seven Pleiades” and the “Seven Ionian Isles,” the “Seven Wise Men of Greece” and the “Seven Sleepers,” the “Seven Wonders of the World,” the “Seven Gates of Thebes,” and the “Seven Devils,” which, we find (by their having been once “cast out”), is the number that inhabit a man. Then as to the *Home Journal’s* appetite for a seventh Virginia Letter, we have the precedent that there were just “Seven Mouths to the Nile” a name, by the way, in which we may well typify our beloved Journal—calling it the Nile among Periodicals, and woman, our queen, its Cleopatra?

But, to my seventh letter.

There was a point of *Virginia dietetics* upon which I brought away an unsatisfied curiosity, viz., their manner of serving tea. In all other parts of the world, the lady at the head of the table puts the milk into the full cup which she serves out, setting the sugar upon the servant's tray, that the guest may sweeten it to suit himself. Now in Virginia, it is exactly the reverse. The lady herself puts in the sugar, but sends round the milk by the servant. And how should this difference be interpreted? Is there not a certain sovereignty of woman in it—showing that all sweetness is to be at her gracious disposal? Or, as milk is proverbially “for babes,” is it a courteous intimation that perhaps the guest is too much of a man to use it? There should be a philosophy somewhere, for the Old Dominion's differing from the rest of the world as to so essential a first principle of tea-table law?

And there is one point of *Virginia æsthetics* upon which I will venture to make a remark. All through the region which we traversed, in our excursions back from the Rappahannock, we observed a custom of *whitewashing the trunks of the trees around the house*. Now, while taste rejoices that they leave their old houses to the harmonious middle-tints of time—(not subject to the paint-mania which blotches the landscape with staring white villas and cottages at the North)—we cannot but find fault with these tall spectres on white stilts which surround the Vir-

ginia mansions. We were told that a house was considered healthier where the miasma was thus corrected ; but I should think the same quantity of lime might be distributed around the premises less conspicuously—laid in trenches or strewn upon the grass. Against the dark walls of the houses those whitewashed trees are in such unescapably strong relief!

*Apropos* of the “miasma” just spoken of. At one of the houses where we were so hospitably entertained, I was fortunate enough to find, in an excellent conversationist who was my next neighbor at table, the most eminent physician of that part of the country. He was about retiring from the profession in which he had passed his life, and, being a man of the world and a philosopher as well as a scientific observer, his comparison of the qualities of the two races (black and white), their different capabilities and relative adaptedness, was very instructive. From a question as to the natural exemption of the negro blood from the intermittent fevers so troublesome to the whites, arose the other points of the discussion. I wish I could tell all that this keen discriminator expressed of knowledge thus gathered by his own eyes and brain. I can scarce venture upon it, however—partly because I could not trust my memory to do full justice to all his statistics and nice distinctions, and partly because it is a subject difficult to enlarge upon without misapprehension.

I may simply state my conviction after listening to his eloquent array of reasonings, moral, physical and medical, that *negrosophy* is a science in which those two great authorities, Common Impression and General Knowledge, are very deficient.

As to the "fever and ague," for which the climate of some parts of Virginia has had a bad name, the doctor thought it was a good deal of a bugbear. New-comers are liable to it, as a natural acclimation; but, in all cases, it could be promptly cured, and, with a little care, always afterwards avoided. It is moreover a preventive of other diseases, leaves the patient a good appetite, and is no injury to the constitution. The treatment of it should be very decided: ten grains of quinine, mustard plasters on the chest, bottles of warm water to the feet, every possible aid to the action of the intestines, and as much whisky and water as could safely be given. After first discovery, to live generously, and never to inhale the morning or evening out-door air on an empty stomach. The truth is (thought my medical friend) that the half-educated and slenderly supported country doctors find it for their interest to prolong the disease, and thus it is naturally much more heard of. But, as a whole, the climate of Virginia is one of the most enjoyable and healthful in the world.

And, by the way, I came very near bringing away from Virginia a curious proof of the superiority of the wild bird

to the tame. In the yard of one of the plantations, I noticed a large flock of geese, who seemed singularly led and commanded by two much handsomer ones, nearly of their own kind. On inquiry, I found that this pair of acknowledged monarchs were *wild geese*, that had been caught in a trap and turned into the yard with their wings clipped. The fifteen or twenty domestic ones had immediately allowed the two strangers to take the lead, following them everywhere in their walks over the fields; and the difference of gait and of voice was quite remarkable. While nothing could well be more ungraceful than the waddle of the barn-yard goose, or more unmusical than its utterances, the aborigines of the wild-wood were most majestic in movement, and, to say the least, very endurable in the key of their voices. With their black backs and necks, white breasts and variegated necks, they performed a certain undeniable parade of nobility at the head of the ignoble of their kind. I was very much tempted to avail myself of our host's kind offer to cage and send them to take command of the geese of Idlewild—only that the season was too far advanced for the journey. But what a comment of nature is the goose, thus ignobled by civilization, upon the misnomer of stigmatizing the untamed falcon as a “buzzard!”

At a little village in Lancaster county, by the way, (Farnham), we saw an instance of buzzard-lapse and falcon-

restoration—a very pretty brick church, which, falling into disuse some years ago, had been first let for a stable, then used as a distillery, but now is reconsecrated as a place of worship. (And, of how many a human soul is this the history!)

There would seem to be a contrast, too, between the present and the former standards of manners and behavior in this neighborhood. On board the Rappahannock steamer, which brought us hither, the largest placard, in gilt letters, thus reads: "Gentlemen respectfully requested not to get into their berths with their boots on." Yet Bishop Meade informs us that, in the records of this Lancaster county, for 1685, it is written, that "one John Chilton was fined and required to appear four times on his bended knees, and ask pardon each time, for a misdemeanor committed in respectable presence; and that another man was fined five thousand pounds of tobacco for profane swearing."

Of modern retrogression, however (and probable retrieval, too—thanks to the ladies!) what stronger instance could there possibly be, than the neglect of the tomb of Mount Vernon! Taken from the cradle of Washington, as are all the incidents of this letter, it will not be amiss, perhaps, to close my correspondence from hence, by contrasting the first honors paid to his sacred ashes, with the subsequent half century of oblivious dilapidation. A relic

of '99, lying at present on my table (and which enables me to present the contrast very effectively), will be interesting to the Mount Vernon spirit of restoration, now general throughout the land. It is a copy of the Funeral Honors to George Washington, *as performed at New York, on first hearing of his death.* Thus reads the published programme:

“ FUNERAL PROCESSION.

“ *Regulations, relative to the procession for rendering funeral honors to the deceased General Washington, as agreed to by the committee of arrangements.*

“ 1. The day to be observed as a day of solemnity and cessation from all business.

“ 2. That no carts, carriages, or persons on horseback (except such as are connected with the procession), appear in the streets through which the procession is to move, from ten o'clock in the forenoon until the procession shall be terminated.

“ 3. The line of procession will be formed in Broadway—the left, which is to be composed of the military, in front of the Park. The other incorporations and societies, in the order determined on by the committee, which will be published on the day of procession, and which General Hughes will order to be carried into effect.

“ 4. The procession will move by the left, in front of the Alms-house, to the head of Beekman street; down Beekman street to Pearl street; along Pearl street to Wall street; up Wall street to the City Hall; down Broad street to Beaver street; through Beaver street to the

Bowling-Green; round the Bowling-Green, in front of the Government House; up Broadway to St. Paul's Church.

"5. It is recommended to the citizens, in those streets through which the procession is going to pass, to cause them to be cleaned, and every obstruction to be removed that might impede the procession.

"On the arrival of the front at the church, on a signal given, the whole will halt, and open to the right and left.

"The bier, preceded by the music, Anacreontic and Philharmonic Societies, clergy, and girls in white robes, will pass through the procession, into the church; the remainder of the procession moving after the bier in reversed order. When the procession shall have entered the church, on a signal given, the minute-guns will cease firing and the bells cease tolling.

"The ceremonies in the church will be opened with prayer by the Reverend Bishop Provoost, which will be succeeded by the first part of sacred music.

"An oration will then be pronounced by G. Morris, Esq., which will be followed by the second part of Sacred music.

"The urn, etc., will then be conveyed into the cemetery; and three volleys fired by the troops under arms over the urn which will close the ceremonies of the day.

"During the movement of the procession, minute-guns will be fired from the Battery, and the bells of the different churches will be tolled muffled.

"Masters of vessels are requested to cause their colors to be hoisted half-mast during the day.

"It is also earnestly recommended to the different incorporations, societies, and all others who join in the procession, to be punctual on the occasion. And to all citizens to observe

a profound silence, as well during the procession, as during the ceremonies in the church.

“ Signals will be given, by firing from a twenty-four pounder in the Park.

“ First gun—between nine and ten o’clock—for the different incorporations and societies to meet at the respective places of rendezvous.

“ Second gun, for the formation of the line of procession.

“ Third gun, for the procession to move.

“ Fourth gun, for the procession to halt, and open to the right and left.

“ Fifth gun, for the minute-guns and bells to cease firing and tolling.

J. M. HUGHES,  
EBENEZER STEVENS,  
JACOB MORTON,  
JAMES FARLIE,  
JOHN STAGG, Jr., }  
} Committee  
of  
Arrangements.

“ NEW YORK, 29th December, ’99.”

Who, on that solemn day—witnessing the total suspension of all business in the city, the procession with its dignitaries and its “ girls in white robes ;” following the urn, the flags of all vessels at half-mast, the cleansing of all the streets through which the funeral procession was to pass, the firing of the minute-guns and tolling of muffled bells, the eulogy, the public order for the citizens to observe a profound silence during the ceremonies, the prayers, the chants—who on that solemn day, let us ask,

would have believed a true prophecy of the next fifty years' national neglectfulness of Mount Vernon!

Thank God that the Ladies and Edward Everett are once more training *that* buzzard of memory into a soaring falcon.

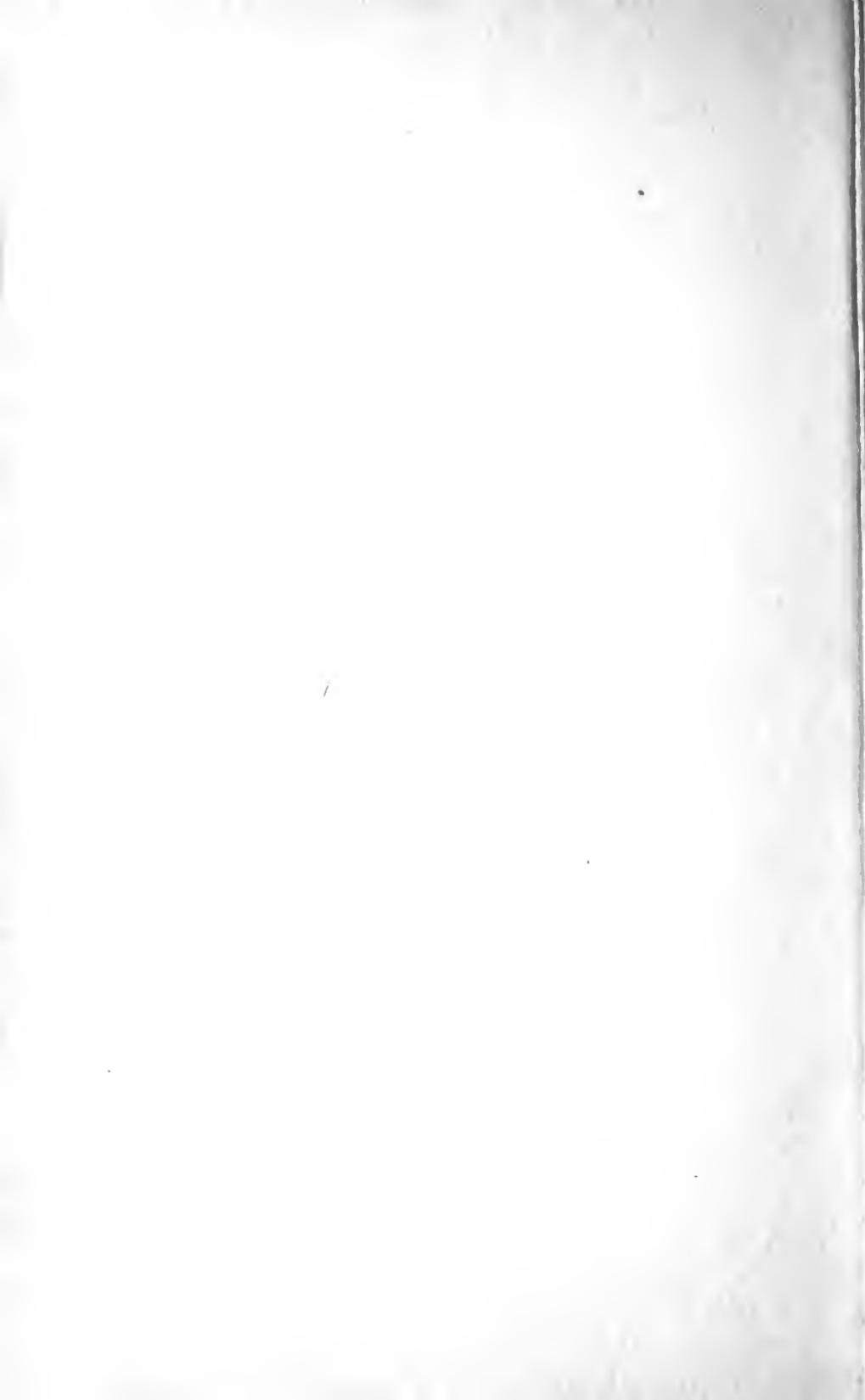
And so home from the Rappahannock and its lessons comes

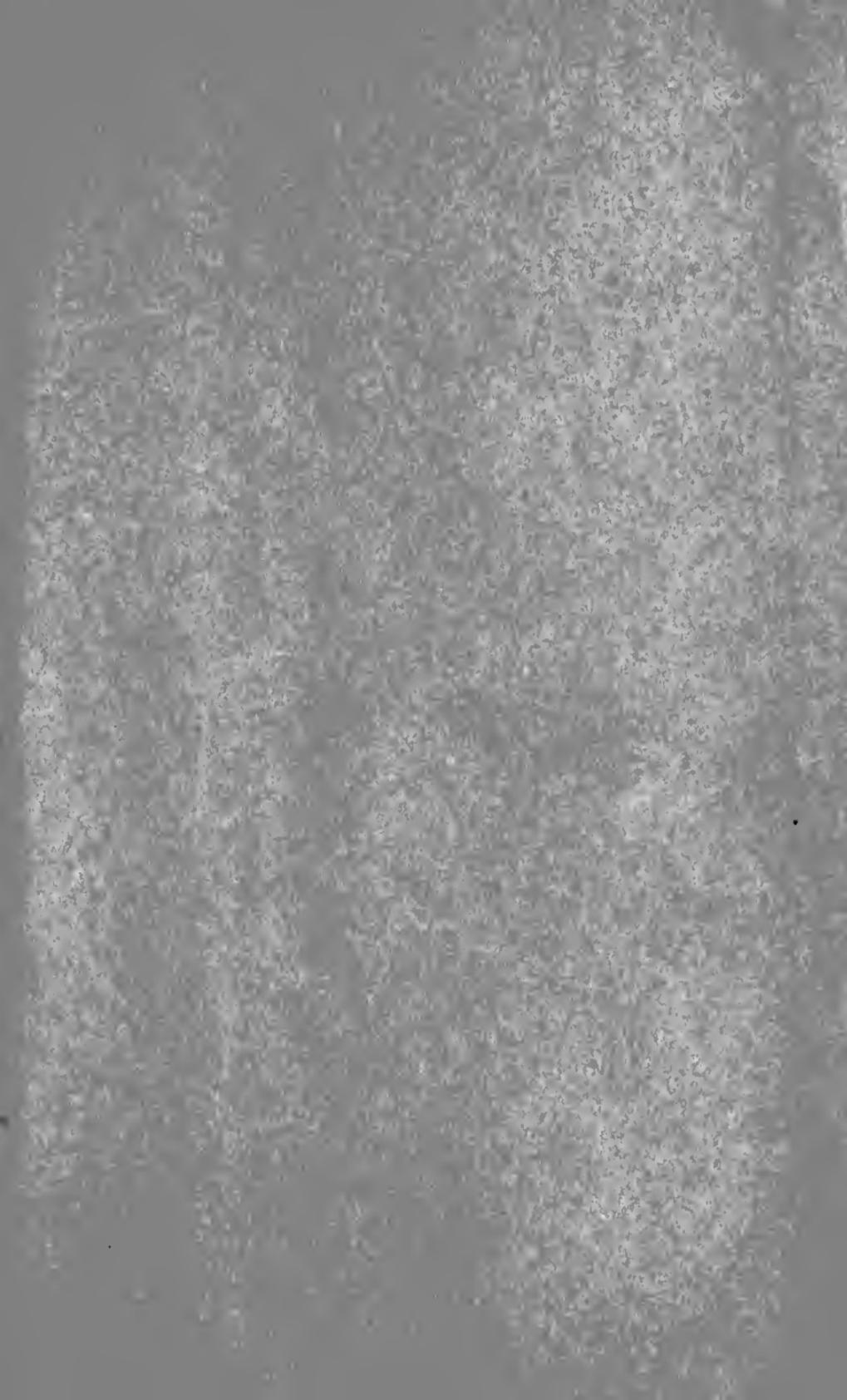
Yours.

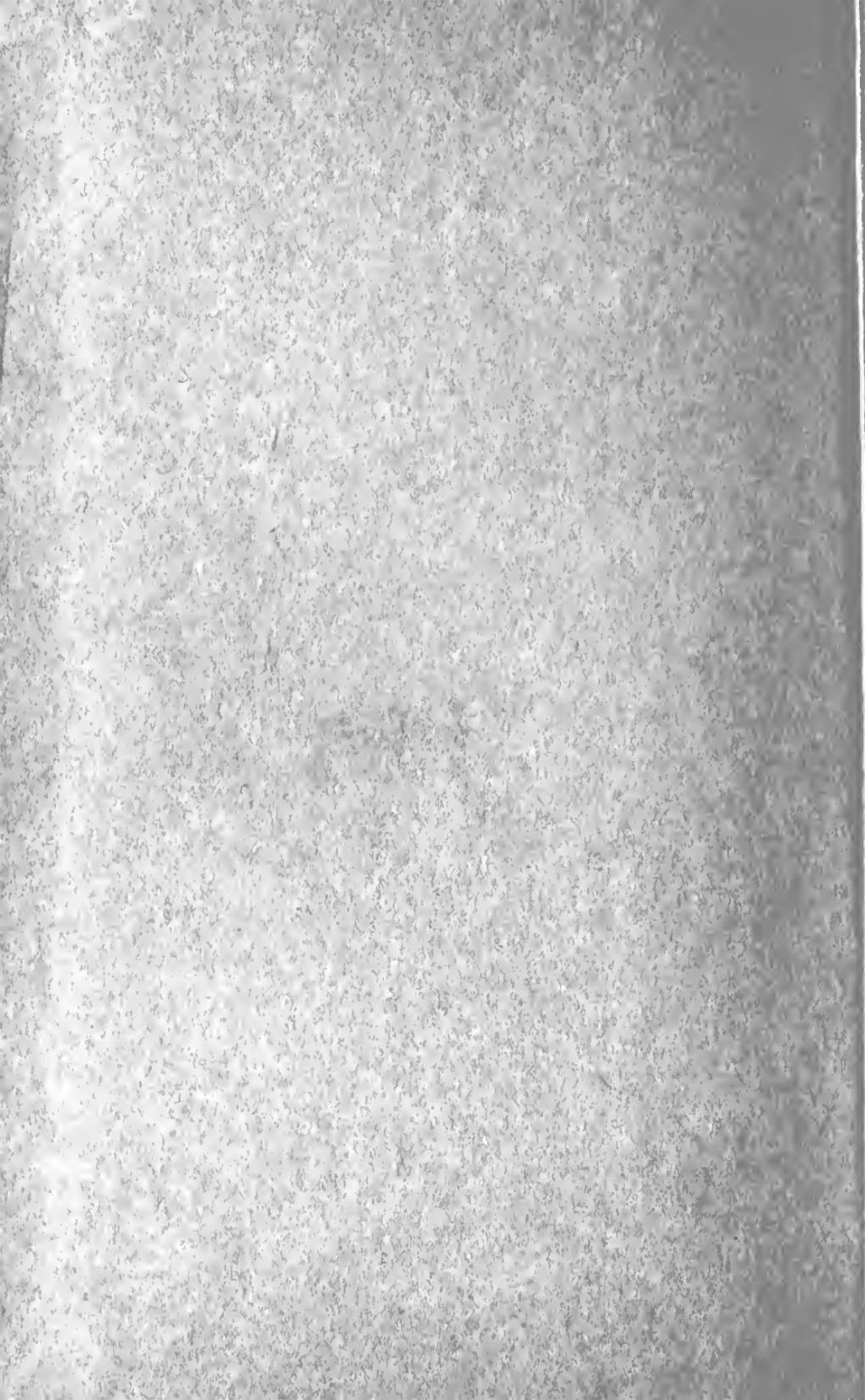
THE END.

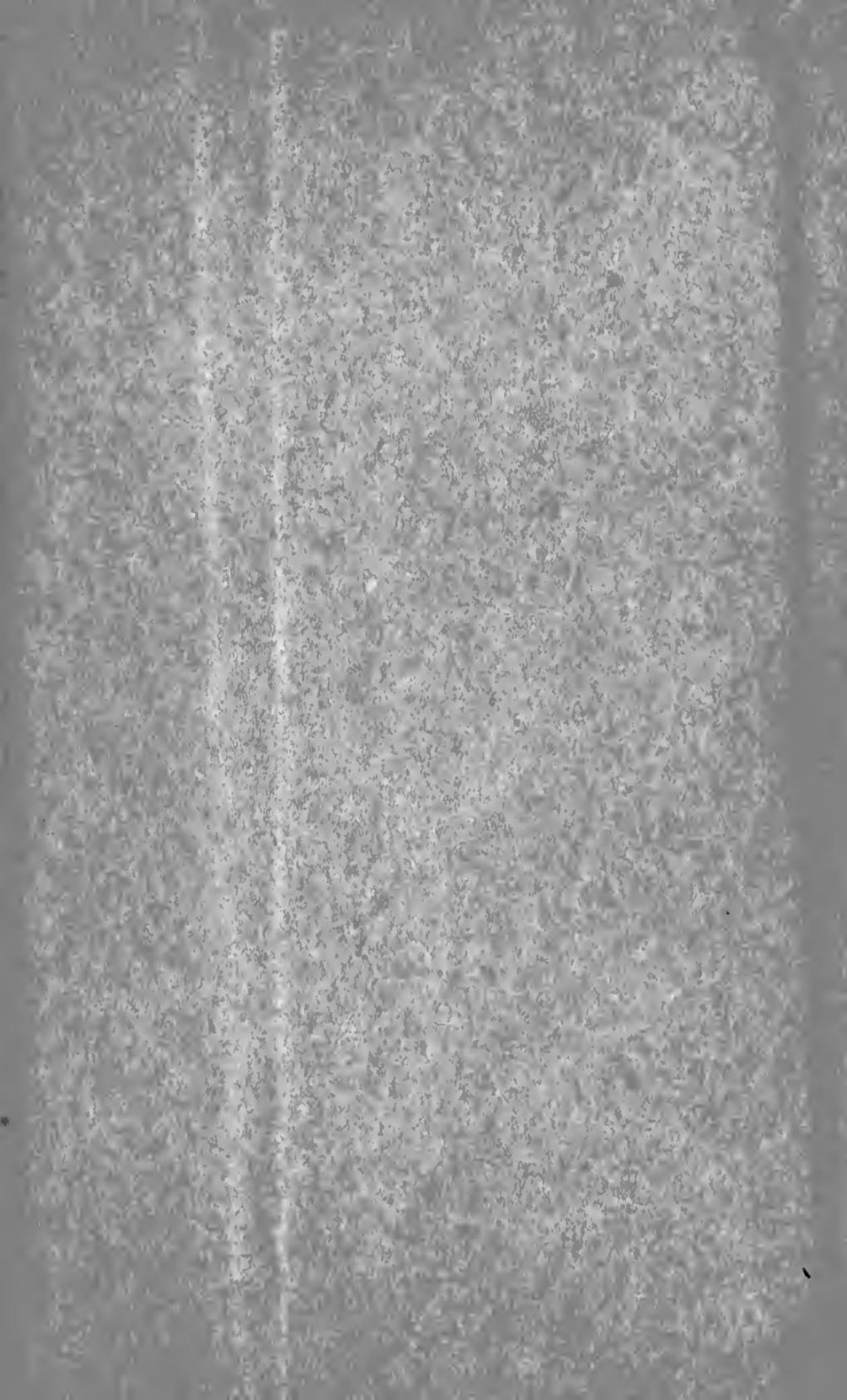
3477-9











LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 009 336 989 0